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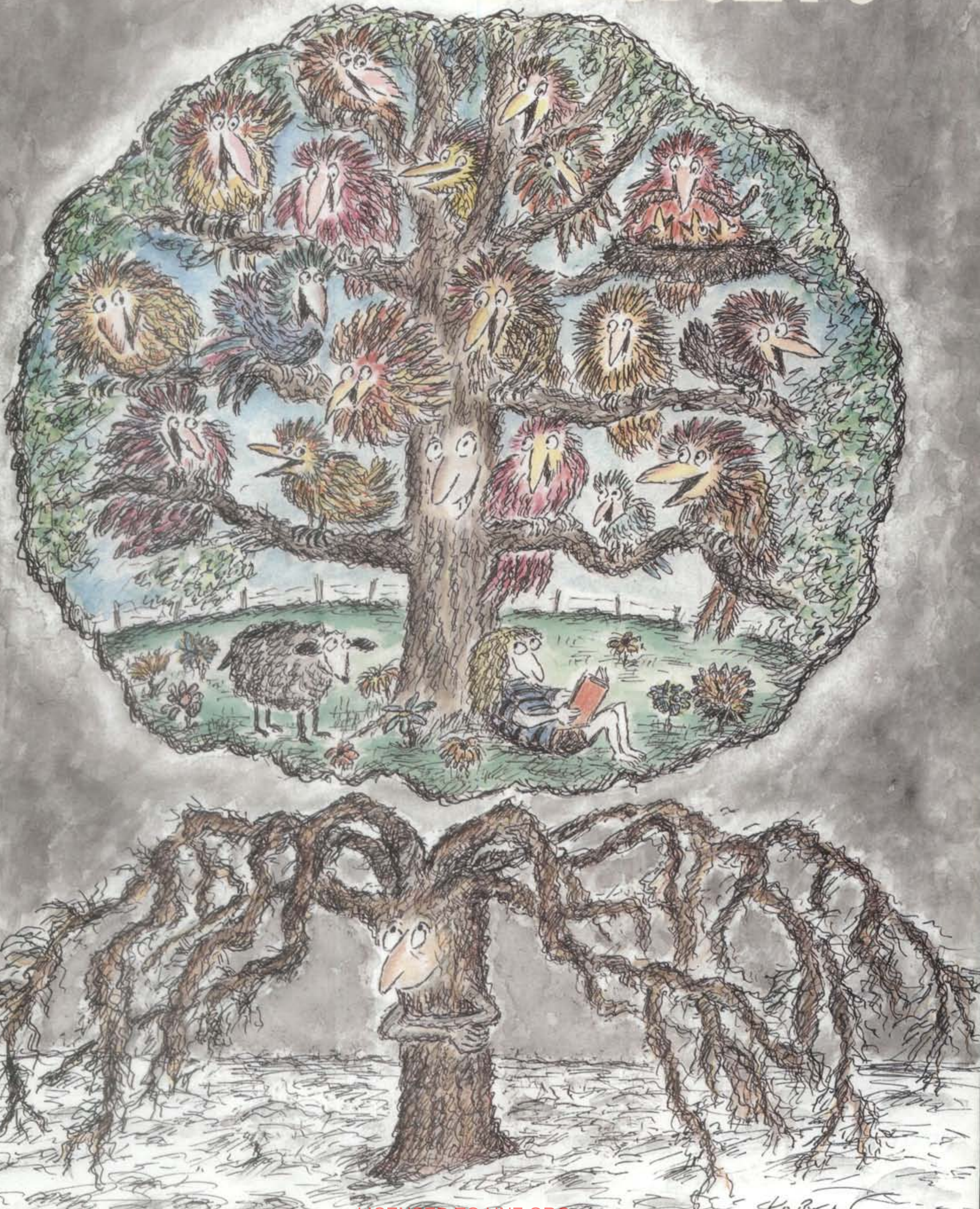

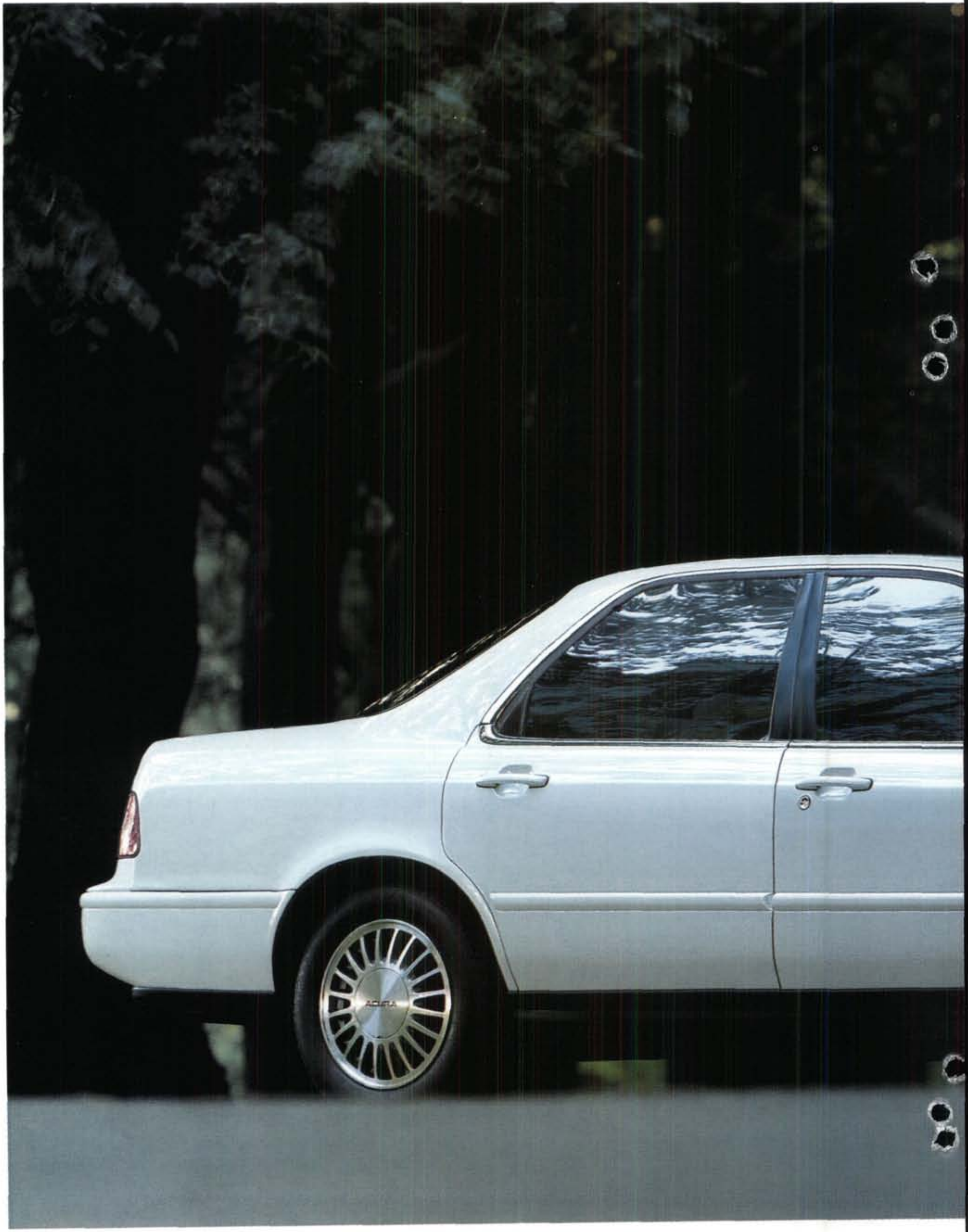

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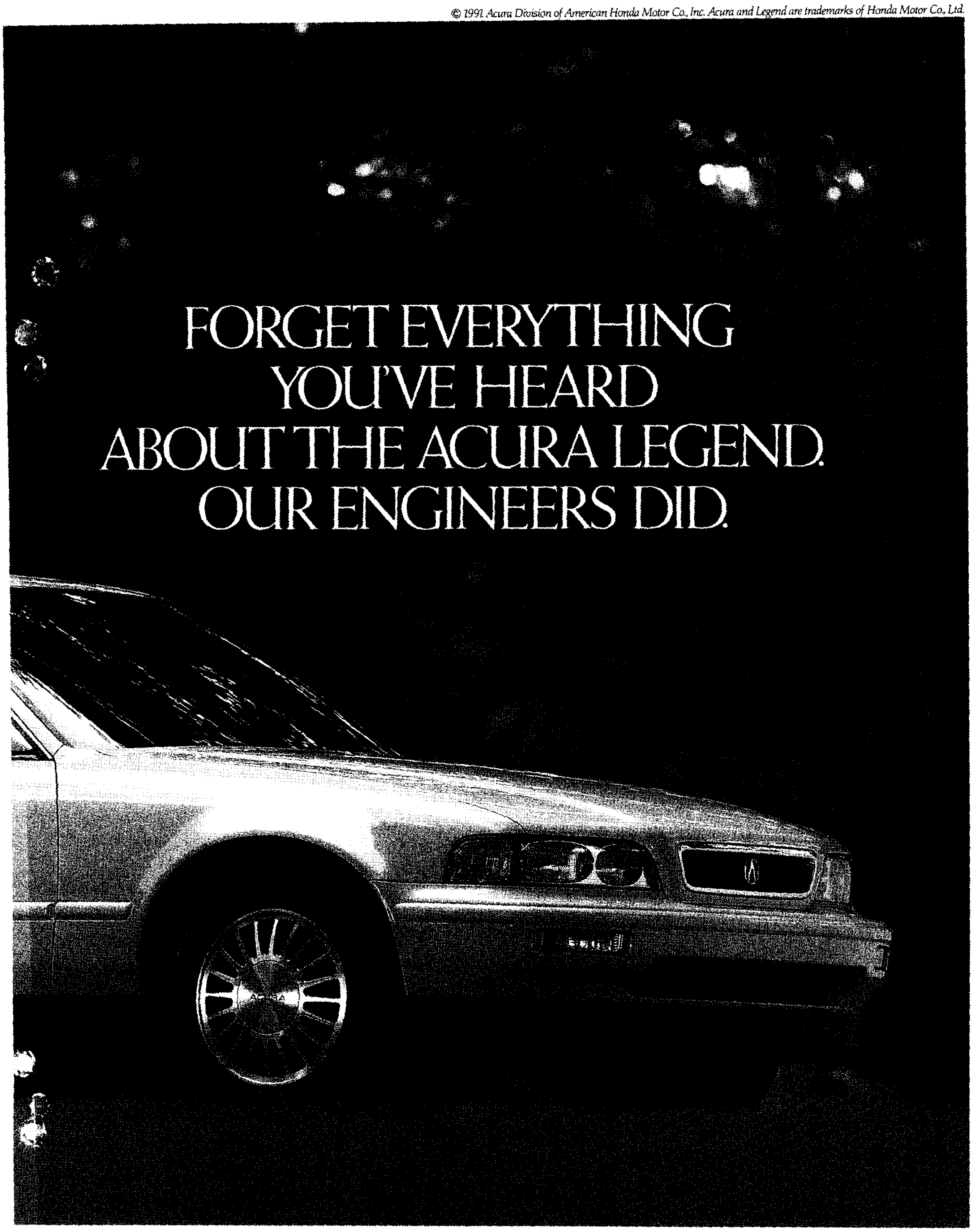
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

MUCH of the churlishness that greeted Mbongeni Ngema's "Township Fever," the South African musical that opened last month at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, was centered on the complaint that little in the show was new. The manifold oppression suffered by blacks in South Africa, commentators asserted, is a subject that has been thoroughly spelled out for us by, among other recent works, the plays of Athol Fugard and the various parts of the "Woza Afrika!" festival at Lincoln Center. In fact, the story at the core of "Township Fever"—an illegal 1987 strike by government railway workers and its violent aftermath—is not crushingly familiar to most of us, and even if it were that would be no reason to disqualify it as suitable material for the theatre: what is good is always new.

As it happens, much in "Township Fever" *is* good. The setting—shanties rising like hills from the back of the stage and fronting fourteen fine musicians—coexists intelligently with the decrepit chic of BAM's Majestic Theatre. The chorale-driven musical numbers, while marred by quite unrelieved martial-arts-like choreography, are often stirringly staged—as was much of Mr. Ngema's previous musical, "Sarafina!" And the performers, with a few distracting exceptions, are suitably explosive. While the show's flashback narrative structure might reasonably be faulted, it seems less bothersome when viewed as a storyteller's attempt to share and document history as well as an effort to please outsiders. Of course, the show's sloganeering, which is particularly heavy in the second act, will not appeal to some viewers. But the agitprop does inject some useful tension into the story, and certainly the fist-waving comes as no surprise: lobby photographs of Committed Artists, the group from which the show has sprung, have set the tone.

Henry Stram, Frances Conroy, and Reno in "A Bright Room Called Day"

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

ASSASSINS—A new musical by Stephen Sondheim (score and lyrics) and John Weidman (book); directed by Jerry Zaks. The cast includes Victor Garber, Annie Golden, Jonathan Hadary, Terrence Mann, and Debra Monk. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

A BRIGHT ROOM CALLED DAY—Frances Conroy, Henry Stram, Reno, and Marian Seldes in a play by Tony Kushner. Opens Jan. 7 at 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16			

THE COUNTRY GIRL—A revival of Clifford Odets' play, with Karen Allen, David Rasche, and Paul McCrane. Previews Jan. 8-9. Opens Jan. 10 at 8. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

DEAD MOTHER, OR SHIRLEY NOT ALL IN VAIN—A new comedy written and directed by, and featuring, David Greenspan. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

GILBERT & SULLIVAN SOCIETY—A concert version of **THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE**, with Agnes Fliss, soprano; Leah Staiman, contralto; William Brooke, tenor; and Sam Silvers and Jerry March, baritones. (CAMI Hall, 165 W. 57th St. Jan. 14 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

GROWN UPS—A revival of Jules Feiffer's 1981 play. Presented by the American Jewish Theatre. Previews begin Jan. 12. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

TAKING STOCK—Lee Wallace and George Guidall in a comedy by Richard Schotter. Previews Jan. 8-9. Opens Jan. 10 at 8. (Jewish Repertory Theatre, 344 E. 14th St. 505-2667.)

YORK THEATRE COMPANY—Presenting a revival of **PHILEMON**, the 1970 musical by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt. Opens Jan. 11 at 8, and runs through Feb. 3. (2 E. 90th St. 534-5366.)

RECENTLY OPENED

THE AMERICAN PLAN—Richard Greenberg's new *comédie larmoyante*, set in the Catskills, is about a lonely, unbalanced young woman who meets and falls in love with an attractive young man who will ultimately betray her. It plays like the work of someone who saw "Dirty Dancing," "Now, Voyager," and "The Heiress" a few too many times and didn't understand what was good about any of them. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/31/90.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Closes Jan. 18.)

BUDDY: THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY—Anyone who thinks that rock and roll lives on had better steer clear of this ersatz docu-musical about the life of Buddy Holly. (11/19/90) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

CAMILLE, A TEARJERKER—Everett Quinton and the late Charles Ludlam are both at their best in this revival of Mr. Ludlam's 1973 spoof, which gives Mr. Quinton a chance to "play the whore" on a grand scale. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

CARREÑO—A show based on the life of Teresa Carreño, the Venezuelan composer, pianist, conductor, and singer. Written and performed by Pamela Ross and directed by Gene Frankel. Most performances are in English; a few are in Spanish. Reopens Jan. 9. (Intar, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

CIRCLE REPERTORY COMPANY—Presenting **LOVE DIATRIBE**. A young man goes to his parents' house for dinner and is so overcome by depression at what he finds there that he gradually becomes immobile. Harry Kondoleon's latest is just the right length and just the right breadth, with just the right degree of zaniness and with something real at its core—in short, the perfect Off Broadway play. (12/31/90) (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Closes Jan. 13.)

DAUGHERTY & FIELD OFF-BROADWAY—The cabaret team of Bill Daugherty and Robin Field in a revue of swing and show tunes. (Double Image Theatre, 15 Vandam St. 924-1120.)

FALSETTOLAND—This latest installment of a three-part cantata by William Finn (music and lyrics) is a sequel to "In Trousers" and "March of the Falsettos." Mr. Finn's [illegible]ry presents a number of new elements (among them a Bar Mitzvah in the hospital room of a man who is dying of AIDS) before dissolving in its own syrup. The music sounds agreeably enough, and the performance goes smoothly, under the direction of James Lapine. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF—The Israeli actor Topol makes a commanding Tevye—the best of all of them—in this production, which falls somewhere between revival and facsimile. The songs are by Bock and Harnick; the dances and direction are re-created from the Jerome Robbins originals; and the costumes are from the Patricia Zipprodt originals. (12/3/90) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510.)

THE FINE ART OF FINESSE—A romantic comedy by Marivaux, in a translation by Alex Szogyi. With Robin Leslie Brown, Frank Geraci, Stuart Lerch, and others. Richard Morse directed. (Pearl Theatre, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes Jan. 12.)

FOREVER PLAID—Stuart Ross's loving, tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. The performances of Jason Graae, Stan Chandler, David Engel, and Guy Stroman (as the Plaids, a close-harmony group snuffed out in the prime of life and brought back to earth for a single evening) are so deadpan, and the songs (arranged by James Raitt) are rendered at such a heightened pitch of musical good faith, that only from Ross's script and choreography would you know the thing is a parody. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

JACKIE MASON: BRAND NEW—The comedian brings his one-man show to Broadway again. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

JEAN COCTEAU REPERTORY—Presenting two plays in rotating repertory: Ibsen's **WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN** and Cocteau's **INFERNAL MACHINE**. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

MONSTER IN A BOX—Spalding Gray's latest autobiographical monologue. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

ONCE ON THIS ISLAND—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score), which is based on Rosa Guy's 1985 novel, "My Love, My Love." (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

PETER PAN—The Cathy Rigby revival is pretty much what you'd expect from a road-show revival that has as its star a world-class gymnast: shopworn—if good, clean—fun. (12/31/90) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 246-0102. Closes Jan. 20.)

THE PIANO LESSON—August Wilson's newest drama, the fourth in his series chronicling the black-American experience in the twentieth century, is set in Pittsburgh, in 1936. In [illegible] exquisite writing and over-all structure (involving the conflict over a piano that figures hauntingly and intricately in one family's history) the play resembles "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" more than "Fences." Wilson takes refuge in an overly mystical and melodramatic ending, but there are some great scenes. Lloyd Richards was the director. (4/30/90) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022. Closes Jan. 27.)

PRELUDE TO A KISS—Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. (3/26/90) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

REMEMBRANCE—Aideen O'Kelly, Malachy McCourt, and John Finn in a play by Graham Reid. (Irish Arts Theatre, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

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THE THEATRE—Cont'd

Gerit Quealy star in this Riverside Shakespeare Company production, directed by Charles Keating. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes Jan. 27.)

Shadowlands—William Nicholson's vulgar stage adaptation of the beautiful television film about C. S. Lewis that he wrote for the BBC is essentially a tourist trap. It Broadwayizes everything that in the movie was subtle or sincere. Directed by Elijah Moshinsky; with Nigel Hawthorne and Jane Alexander. (11/26/90) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099.)

Shogun: The Musical—Or "James Clavell's Shogun: The Musical," to give credit where credit is due, is a real hoot. It has a shipwreck sequence, a lightning effect, an entire number performed on a treadmill, a slow-motion sequence, a gunshot, an earthquake, a rainstorm, a snowstorm, a cavalry charge, a Ninja raid, a haiku competition, and a song about sex paraphernalia, and it begins with two half-naked men banging on drums. What more do you want? (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102.)

Six Degrees of Separation—You're best off knowing nothing about the new John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright, director Jerry Zaks, and actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. (6/25/90) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Smoke on the Mountain—This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray (who also performs, along with six other versatile actor-musicians), it re-creates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of more or less devout gospel singers have been invited to appear. (Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

The Sum of Us—David Stevens' poignant comedy about how hard it is for parents and children to break free of each other (particularly if they get on too well) is set in present-day Australia. Depending on how you look at it, the play is either very dear and rather flawed or rather dear and very flawed; but cast and direction are both excellent, and Tony Goldwyn is electrifying as a young homosexual who wishes his father weren't quite so laid back about his homosexuality. (11/5/90) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Those Were the Days—One could almost wish that this tribute to the Yiddish musical theatre, directed and choreographed by Eleanor Reissa, were less assimilated—stricter in its concept and selection (witness the title song, which has nothing to do with the Yiddish musical theatre). But the charming and adept performances of Bruce Adler, Robert Abelson, Mina Bern, and Lori Wilner, together with Zalmen Mlotek's klezmer music, make the show a joyful celebration of the shtetl culture, and put it among the very best of its kind. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 302-2302.)

Township Fever—Mbongeni Ngema's new South African musical. (Majestic, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. Closes Jan. 20.)

LONG RUNS

ASPECTS OF LOVE: Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cats or trains) but ends up being a monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **BLACK AND BLUE:** An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while La Vern Baker, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **CITY OF ANGELS:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular setting and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. Tom Wopat and Michael Rupert lead the cast. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run celebrated its thirtieth birthday last May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **A FEW GOOD MEN:** "Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military-courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series. With Perry King, Bradley Whitford, and Kathleen McNenny. Directed by Don Scardino. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1991:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. Suzanne Blakeslee, Jeff Lyons, Bob Rogerson, and Linda Strasser make up the cast. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. With Rene Ceballos, David Carroll, Lynette Perry, Chip Zien, Timothy Jerome, John Wylie, and Caitlin Brown. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. With Craig Schulman as Jean Valjean, Robert Westenberg as Javert, and Christy Baron as Fantine. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. Starring Steven Keats and Priscilla Lopez. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **THE ROTHSCHILDS:** A revival of the 1970 musical by Jerry Bock (score), Sheldon Harnick (lyrics), and Sherman Yellen (book). The cast includes Mike Burstyn, Sue Ann Gershenson, and John Loprieno. Lonny Price directed. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

DANCE

"La Source"—Balanchine's bonbon of a tribute to French classical dancing in general and to Violette Verdy in particular—goes into the New York City Ballet's repertoire this week. How it will be danced cannot be predicted; after the account of the newly revived "La Valse" we saw in November, we are chary of buttonholing anyone to tell them to go. (And considering the way that City Ballet's orchestra has sounded in recent seasons, we don't even want to think about what will happen to the [illegible]chanting Delibes score.) Still, a fan always hopes. "La Source" has its cheeky moments, when the allegro choreography becomes almost as high-spirited as a cancan; but the ballet [illegible] actually a double pas de deux for a ballerina and danseur, with an interlude for a female soloist and a small female corps—is full of lovely, even haunting images. One of the reasons for its staying power (it was made for Verdy and John Prinz in 1968) is that the images are thoroughly classical: a dancer could project them through attention to the steps and music alone, without attempting to impersonate Verdy herself, who was a source of unquenchable personal charm. A cause for hope is that Peter Martins, who once danced the male role in the ballet, has written about it in the tone of a respectful adversary, calling it "truly murderous if danced fully." Coming from a dancer like Martins, who thrived on challenges, this is tantamount to praise.

As we thought about "La Source," we were suddenly struck with overpowering desire to revisit one of our favorite paintings in New York—Degas's "Portrait de Mlle. E.F. . . ; À Propos du Ballet 'La Source,' " at the Brooklyn Museum. The "E.F." here refers to the nineteenth-century Paris Opéra ballerina Eugénie Fiocre, who originated the role of the beautiful but heartless Georgian princess Nouredda in the lavish production of "La Source" that Arthur Saint-Léon choreographed in 1866. The scene shows Fiocre—in costume but barefoot—as Nouredda, aligned with two female attendants and a chestnut-colored horse, by the edge of a stream so pure that it mirrors them, yet mysteriously blurs their reflections. One of Fiocre's discarded ballet slippers points [illegible]ward her naked foot; the mate points (a little joke?) toward the horse's shod hoof.

Alas, the painting is in storage for a while (the museum rotates its permanent holdings), but we did meet up with a fascinating 1988 monograph by Ann Dumas—"Degas's 'Mlle. Fiocre' in Context." It contains some enchanting material related to the 1866 ballet, including rarely reproduced visual material. And its discussion of the painting's understated theme of reflection piqued our curiosity to take another look at the mirrored structure of Balanchine's work.

New York City Ballet—Jan. 8 at 8: "Mozartiana," divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," and "Souvenir de Florence." . . . ¶ Jan. 9 at 8: "La Source," "Robert Schumann's 'Davidsbündlertänze'," and "Stravinsky Violin Concerto." . . . ¶ Jan. 10 at 8: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "Dances at a Gathering," and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ Jan. 11 at 8: Divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," "Brahms/Handel," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 2: "Scotch Symphony," "Stravinsky Violin Concerto," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 8: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "Robert Schumann's 'Davidsbündlertänze'," and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ Jan. 13 at 1: "La Source," "Eight Easy Pieces," "Eight More," and "Brahms/Handel." . . . ¶ Jan. 13 at 7: "Scotch Symphony," "Eight More," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," and "Dances at a Gathering." . . . ¶ Jan. 15 at 8: "Allegro Brillante," "Dances at a Gathering," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ Jan. 16 at 8: "Square Dance," "Fearful Symmetries," and "I'm Old Fashioned." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Feb. 24.)

"Altogether Different"—Opening performances of a three-week series (through Jan. 27) that will feature six choreographers and their groups. Jan. 8 and Jan. 11 at 8, and Jan. 12 at 2: Peter Pucci Plus Dancers. . . . ¶ Jan. 9-10 at 8 and Jan. 13 at 7:30: Wendy Perron Dance Company. . . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 8 and Jan. 13 at 2: Mark Taylor & Friends. . . . ¶ Jan. 15 at 8: Ruby Shang and Company, Dancers. . . . ¶ Jan. 16 at 8: Stephen Petronio Company. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

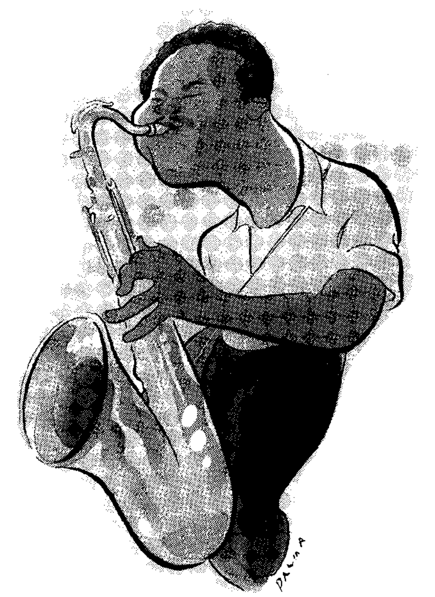
DancEllington—A ten-member company led by Mercedes Ellington. On opening night, the Duke Ellington Orchestra, conducted by Mercer Ellington, will appear. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Jan. 10-12 at 8 and Jan. 13 at 3.)

New American Ballet Ensemble—In the premières of Benjamin Harkarvy's "Premonition" and Carrie Diamond's "Triumph of Terpsichore," as well as other works. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. Jan. 11-12 at 8 and Jan. 13 at 2. Tickets at the door on the days of the performances.)

NIGHT LIFE

WE'VE been at the Ritz on nights when the crowd was slam-dancing and stage-diving—nights when we imagine the coat check was bursting with skateboards. We've been at the Eagle Tavern for its Monday-night hoedowns—nights when Irish-music collectives rumbled into the small hours. We've stayed out too late. We've woken up with strange things in our pockets: a handful of plastic emeralds and sapphires from Rainbow & Stars, a bottle of Crystal hot sauce from Delta 88.

The most *relaxing* night we ever had, though, was at one of the Metropolitan Museum's cocktail parties, which take place every Friday and Saturday from 4:30 until 8:45, when the institution closes down for the night. The museum has been doing this for a year or so, but it wasn't until recently—when our interest in such things as body-slamming started to taper off—that we paid a visit. There was no smoke. There was no waiting for a table. There was nobody wearing a bandanna. What's more, the "band" was a string quintet—ah, to talk and be *heard!* We had a white wine. We checked out some statues. We got a giddy sensation from partying on sacred turf. And, of course, we remembered the museum-café scene in "Batman," and we relaxed in the knowledge that if the Joker showed up with a boom box the museum wouldn't let him in.



Wayne Shorter at the Blue Note

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**JOHN PIZZARELLI, JR.,** begins work in the Oak Room on Jan. 8. Pizzarelli is a seven-string guitarist, as is his father, Bucky, with whom he has often been heard around town. Here he heads up a trio of his own; standards and out-of-the-way stuff can be found in their repertoire, and they've got a light, cool touch. In addition to having fleet fingers (his chord runs put us in mind of Django Reinhardt), Pizzarelli is an engaging performer and a silky-voiced crooner. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine-fifteen, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—It's everything a cabaret should be: sleek, elegant, intimate, and slightly decadent. It also offers something that other cabarets do not: tapas, which come from the Spanish restaurant adjoining the club. The Brazilian-born singer **ELZA SOARES,** who delivers a jazz-samba hybrid, is at work Jan. 8-12. Kenia, a native of Rio, sings on Jan. 13; and Maucha Adnet appears Jan. 15-16.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Many musicians who visit this jazz house are honored—if that's the word—by having their portraits done, "in concert," by the house artist. These impressionistic renderings round out a glossy décor that includes flying-saucer light fixtures, burgundy velvet drapes, and some neon wading birds. This month, the club pays tribute to its namesake, Charlie (Bird) Parker, by featuring performers who shared the stage with him: pianist **WALTER BISHOP, JR.,** leads a trio through Jan. 10; the Charlie Parker Memorial Quintet appears Jan. 11-12; and pianist **JUNIOR MANCE'S** trio works out Jan. 14-17. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is the place to find big-league jazz artists; it's an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? Jan. 8-13, the bandstand is shared by the **KENNY WHEELER** band (featuring guitarist **JOHN ABERCROMBIE**) and the **OREGON TRIO,** which comprises the core of the acoustic jazz-lite band known in the nineteen-seventies simply as Oregon. The saxophonist, composer, and onetime Weather Reporter **WAYNE SHORTER** chairs a quartet beginning Jan. 15. Music from nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. The young, Chicago-bred guitarist **JEAN-PAUL BOURELLY,** who roams freely between idioms, will be here Jan. 10. Performing on the same bill is **LARRY MITCHELL.** Jan. 11 belongs to **ANNIE HASLAM;** the pompadoured cutup **BUSTER POINDEXTER** and his **BANSHEES OF BLUE,** who stop by here every so often, come in on Jan. 12. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. Pianist **BENNY GREEN,** drummer **KENNY WASHINGTON,** and bassist **CHRISTIAN MC BRIDE** join forces through Jan. 12. Pianist **GEORGE CABLES** and bassist **SANTI DEBRIANO** get under way on Jan. 14. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The **MODERN JAZZ QUARTET** is currently in the midst of a month-and-a-half-long engagement in the Café Carlyle. The quartet, which has been doing its fastidious swinging for more than thirty years and has at least four hundred pieces in its repertoire, tends to play in big halls these days, so its occasional layovers in this intimate space are to be treasured. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans' Bar, **FRANK OWENS** presides at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. Once and future avant-garde pianist **CECIL TAYLOR,** who said recently, "I'm still living on the edge," leads a trio Jan. 8-13. **JUDY NIEMACK** starts up with a trio of her own on Jan. 15. Music after ten.

Eagle Tavern, 355 W. 14th St. (924-0275)—An Irish bar, way out on the Western edge of town, where the great potholed boulevards turn to cobblestones, and the world across the Hudson flashes its come-hither signs. The back room has Hibernian sounds on Fridays and bluegrass on Saturdays. Singer-guitarist Robbie O'Connell entertains on Jan. 11, and Bob Paisley & Southern Grass appear on Jan. 12. Sets at nine and eleven.

Fat Tuesdays, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through the iffy-looking side door, down the fun-house tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll find this softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. Singer **CASSANDRA WILSON** performs through Jan. 13; **HELEN MERRILL** and a trio begin a week-long engagement on Jan. 15. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—With jazz you get eggroll. At this posh-looking Chinese restaurant, tucked into a midtown skyscraper, you'll find a lot of businessmen and a lot of hanging plants. In the middle of the main dining room, you'll also find a Steinway grand, which currently belongs to pianist-singer **FREDDY COLE,** the late Nat's younger brother. Bassist Eddie Edwards and guitarist Ed Zad make it a trio. Music from eight Tuesdays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

Jan Wallman's, 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—A cozy room for singers and their followers, cheek by jowl with the Iroquois Hotel. Singer and Autoharp player Lucy Hillary and pianist Mike Huffman claim Jan. 8; John Meyer performs on Jan. 9; Rob Russo and David Lahm are in on Jan. 10; and Bob Ost's "Love and Laughter" can be seen Jan. 11-12. Shows at nine and eleven. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. Stride pianist **JUDY CARMICHAEL** and saxophonist **MICHAEL HASHIM** are here Wednesdays through Saturdays. Music from about nine-forty-five.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor music-and-performance space, where people come to ponder the meaning of harmolodics and the post-ness of postmodernism. The room is run by two amiable young guys from Wisconsin, whose views on such things as cover charges are enlightened. The **PAUL MOTIAN** trio holds sway Jan. 10-11; clarinettist **DON BYRON'S** outfit plays the klezmer music of Borscht Belt king Mickey Katz on Jan. 12; and the **JAZZ PASSENGERS,** a hard-bop-meets-downtown group founded by a couple of Lounge Lizards alums, perform Jan. 13-14. Music after nine.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A good sound system, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the Hoboken Sound and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Jan. 10: Clockhammer, 5 Chinese Brothers, and Canoeful of Strangers. Jan. 11: Alice Donut, Beme Seed, and Spongehead. Jan. 12: 3 Mustaphas 3 and Chunk. Manhattanites who stay through the second set will need all their Scout training to get home.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—What Cole Porter might call a regal eagle's nest. Singer MARGARET WHITING, who's at work here just now, recently released her thirty-fifth album, "Then and Now." The record includes some standards (by Johnny Mercer, Harold Arlen, and others) and some new material (by Brian Gari and Francesca Blumenthal, among others), and Ms. Whiting is currently offering samples of both. Shows from nine. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steakhouse, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. Mondays belong to Howie Wyeth's ragtime trio, Tuesdays to VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS, Wednesdays to the Stan Rubin band, Fridays to Rick Hardeman and His Basin Street Six, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. Music from six on Sundays, from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine on Fridays and Saturdays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. A few of the club's favorite sons—pianist MC COY TYNER, bassist AVERY SHARPE, and drummer AARON SCOTT—are in residence Jan. 8-13. The Don Grolnick quintet begins a week-long stay on Jan. 15. The electrified big band of the late Gil Evans, now under the direction of his son, the trumpeter Miles Evans, is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the downstairs room, which is as big and plain as a mess hall, the Cuban-born Latin-jazz clarinettist and saxophonist PAQUITO D'RIVERA performs Jan. 11-12. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Two flights up, at the Top of the Gate, bop pianist TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI and the LEW TABACKIN big band heat up on Mondays. Music from eight.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia. The GEOFF KEEZER quartet is in charge through Jan. 13; on Jan. 15, the ED BLACKWELL PROJECT begins work. Mondays are reserved for the late Mel Lewis's big band. Music after ten.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad. TINY LIGHTS, who perform on Jan. 9, play an odd mixture of R. & B. and art music. One minute you'd swear they were disciples of Big Brother & the Holding Company, but then, just when you're headed for the dance floor, they'll break into whale sounds. Some other highlights: the SPIN DOCTORS on Jan. 10; DEFUNKT on Jan. 11; Savoy Truffle on Jan. 12; and the GRATEFUL DREAD on Jan. 15.

Zanzibar & Grill, 550 Third Ave., at 36th St. (779-0606)—A Murray Hill jazz resort, where the ceiling fans turn slowly and the palm trees rustle tropically. Guitarist STEVE KAHN performs Jan. 10-12. Music from nine-thirty. Dining.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. KENNY BARRON and PAUL WEST start up on Jan. 14. Music from eight weeknights. Closed Sundays.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

A CLUBGOER'S NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS:

(1) On the nights I go out, I resolve to eat dinner at least half an hour before Arsenio comes on.

(2) I will not eat cassoulet.

(3) I will resist dessert, because you can tell.

(4) I will never walk, either alone or in a group, on 18th Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues, unless I have a grenade.

(5) I will try to remember the names of door people better.

(6) I will no longer stand behind a velvet rope for more than three minutes. If a club doesn't want me, there are plenty of other places I can take my business (though I don't want to go to those places unless everyone starts thinking the way I do).

(7) I will not put my coat-check ticket in the same pocket as my money.

(8) I will not hang out with people just because they have drink tickets.

(9) I will dance on a pedestal only if I'm getting paid.

(10) I will test my waterproof makeup at home first.

(11a) I will not tell people that I remember dancing to "YMCA" when it first came out and the Village People were still cute. It makes them nervous; or

(11b) I will not ask people who Thelma Houston is. It makes them very nervous.

(12) I will bring a handkerchief.

(13) I will try not to wear black more than twice a week.

(14) I will say "fabulous" only if I really mean it, and, as God is my witness, I will never say "fabu" or "ciao" to anyone not from Milano.

(15) My ex-roommate used to play a show tune with the lyric "Knowing when to leave may be the smartest thing that anyone can learn." I will learn.

(16) I will not blithely elect to walk a bit for "some air" when I leave, no matter what my condition. If I need to refresh my lungs, I will wait until I get home and stick my head out the window. In the meantime, I will grab the first cab waiting in front of the club's door.

(17) I will throw my clothes in the hamper as soon as I get in the door, and wash the two packs of smoke out of my hair.

(18) I will go to work the next day. I will try to find something else to do that night. Maybe a movie, or the theatre. They're cultural. And, besides, I can be out by 11.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

"Eros"—A performance work by Yoshito Ohno, Maureen Fleming, and Mickey Hart. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Jan. 10-13 at 7:30. Through Jan. 20.)

Blue Man Group—In a new performance work. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Jan. 10-12 at 10. Through Jan. 19.)

Paul Zaloom—Using toys, tools, trash, and packaging materials as props for his new work, "My Civilization." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Jan. 8-12 and Jan. 15-16 at 8, and Jan. 13 at 3. Through Jan. 20.)

ART

JEFFREY DENNIS, who was born in 1958 in Colchester, England—Constable country—is a marvellously acculturated artist and, we think, a most apt poet of the urban condition. Most of his paintings evince a love for the decorative arts as well as for movies. In many of them we may see, perhaps for the first time, a link between, say, the nineteenth-century aesthetic movement of William Morris and the Anglo-Popisms of Richard Hamilton, or between early sixties British kitchen-sink movies and Stanley Kubrick's brand of futurism, or, for that matter, between the Romanticism of Constable and the lapsed Romanticism of Lucian Freud.

Dennis structures his paintings as montages, a little like David Salle used to. A small self-portrait, for example, or a grisaille street scene might turn up as an inset against a painted ground that suggests Victorian wallpaper, the label from a can of beans or peas, or some murkily romantic and very English-looking abstraction. Rather like the painter Malcolm Morley, who was an early influence, Dennis is also fluent in many styles. Sometimes there are many little inset scenes in a single painting, as if to evoke a string of associations. Sometimes the canvases are small and conventionally shaped. In "Heartwood," on the other hand, a large six-panel painting in Dennis's current exhibition (Ala, 560 Broadway; through January 26), we find a pea-green motif as a color field and a number of small vignettes that include a country landscape; the kind of exurban highway scene that has begun to remind us of ruins in Rome; a guy with a Coke bottle sitting in a shack next to a toilet; and another guy, squatting, whose manual activity is cause for some doubt.

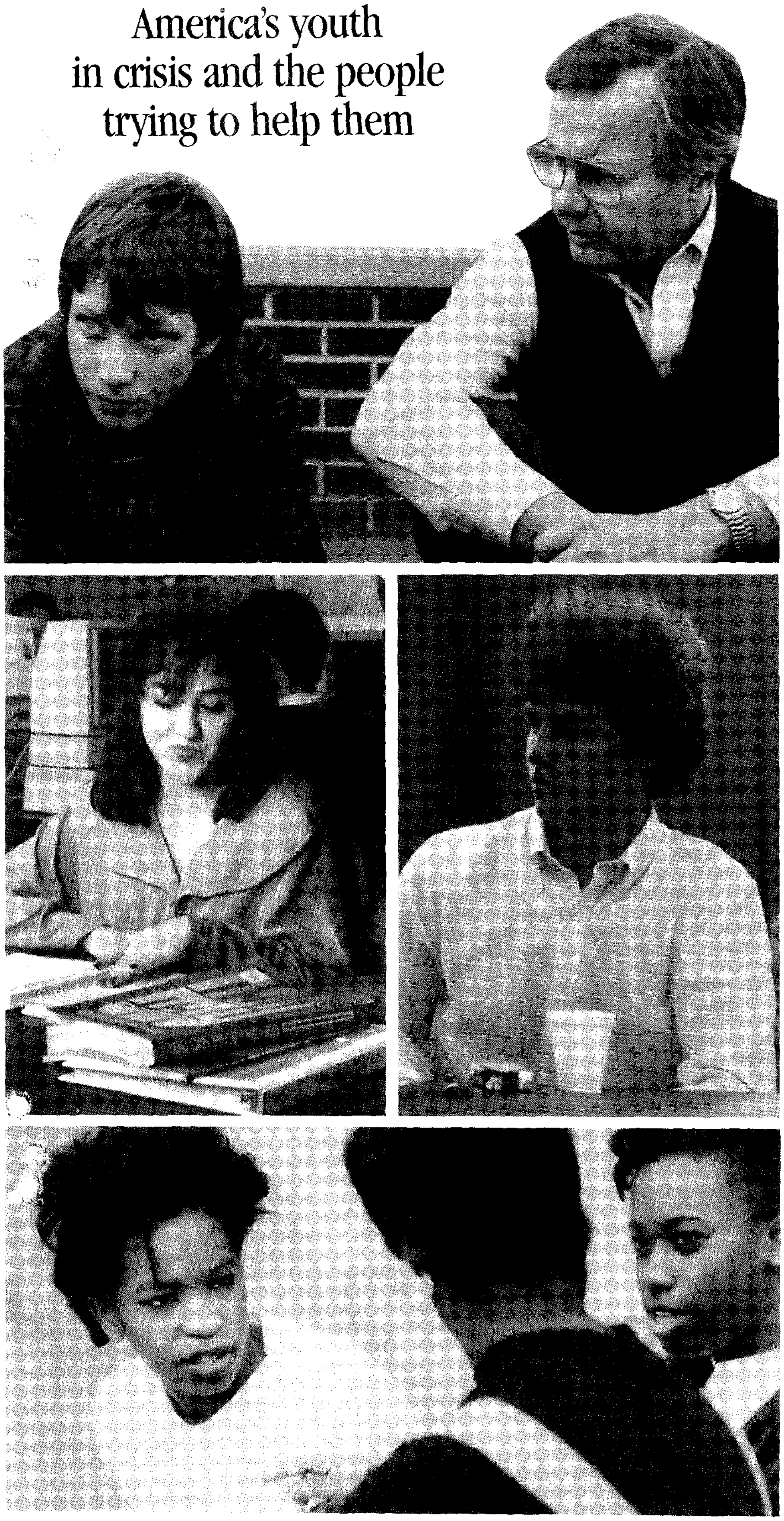
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries" includes four hundred works of art from the pre-Columbian era through 1950. Through Jan. 13. . . . ¶ "Carroll and Milton Petrie European Sculpture Court." If you've ever wondered what the Metropolitan looked like before all the variously styled annexes were added, even before it was given its present façade, wander down this oddly long-and-narrow corridor. One of the long walls is the restored 1888 carriage entrance to the museum—part of its first addition—and it is all that remains of the Renaissance Revival façade. Opposite the massive rusticated arched windows of this red-brick-and limestone relic is a recent neoclassical wall designed by Kevin Roche, with a pitched skylight roof connecting the old wall to the new. The architecture works quite well, even with its hokey trellises and plantings. It is an awful lot of space, however, to devote to an essentially uninteresting smattering of seventeenth-to-nineteenth-century statuary. The best works, in fact, are in an annex—more an architectural afterthought—off to the side of the court, in the entrance to the grandly named Henry R. Kravis Wing. There you will find Rodin's "Burghers of Calais," which is awkwardly sited but would look great anywhere; Bourdelle's amazing bronze statue of the sculptor Carpeaux; and a number of Maillols. Perhaps the finest works in the Petrie Court proper are the earliest: two very funny sculptures of a fruit-bearing Priapus and Flora that originally graced the entrance of the Villa Borghese, by Pietro Bernini,

ALL OUR CHILDREN

WITH BILL MOYERS

America's youth
in crisis and the people
trying to help them



**Premieres Wednesday
January 16th at
8:00 p.m. on PBS**

*Check local listings for
time and PBS channel*

- Jake has spent most of his teenage life in foster homes. He joined a satanic cult because he thought no one else would accept him.
- Michelle left home at 13, married at 14, and dropped out of school at 15.
- Marsha's parents brought her to Massachusetts from Jamaica and then left her to virtually fend for herself.

America's ability to compete in the world is being compromised. As many as 800,000 students a year drop out, fail to graduate, or finish school unprepared for further education. They face lives of alienation, dependency, and squandered potential.

In a powerful, 90-minute documentary, Bill Moyers probes this national tragedy and examines what's being done to stem the tide. His report is followed by a live one-hour debate from Columbia, South Carolina's historic Longstreet Theater.

This is a special opportunity to see how *all* Americans can make a difference.

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assisted by his soon-to-be-better-known young son, Gian Lorenzo. . . . ¶ "Théâtre de la Mode," in the Costume Institute, is a re-creation of a 1945 fashion exhibition that raised money for French war relief. Due to a fabric shortage, the couture, by such designers as Balenciaga, Lanvin, and Worth, was presented in miniature, on thirty-inch wire mannequins with ceramic heads. A hundred and seventy of the original dolls have been restored for this show. . . . ¶ "Albrecht Dürer: The Apocalypse" presents fifteen woodcuts of apocalyptic catastrophes, along with a small number of Gothic and Renaissance prints. Through March 17. . . . ¶ Photographs from the fifties and sixties, selected from the museum's collection. Among the artists shown are William Klein, Helen Levitt, Bill Brandt, and Lisette Model. Through March 17. . . . ¶ The recently acquired "Evening: Landscape with Aqueduct," by Théodore Géricault (1791-1824), is the focus of a small exhibition of his landscapes and related works. Through Jan. 13. . . . ¶ Fifteen American quilts and coverlets, made between 1803 and 1930, are on view. Through Jan. 20. . . . ¶ More than two hundred American portrait miniatures, most of them in watercolor on ivory, and none larger than six inches in size. Among the immortalized sitters are George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and Abraham Lincoln. Through Feb. 10. . . . ¶ A hundred and twenty-five functional tools and decorative pieces from New Guinea, carved from three types of bone: bird, pig, and human. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture" is divided into four themes (graffiti, caricature, comics, advertising) and includes more than two hundred and fifty works. Through Jan. 15. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn, 1991.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Robert Rauschenberg: The Silk Screen Paintings, 1962-64." It has been more than a decade since the last Rauschenberg retrospective, so this very focussed show of one of the artist's most productive periods comes as a special treat. Half of the nearly eighty silk-screen paintings he made during the early sixties are on view, and their energy is intense. These paintings are striking because while they chronicle the spirit of their time with amalgamations of machine-produced media images—Rauschenberg's Kennedy is as much an icon as Warhol's Marilyn—they are also chockablock full of glorious brushwork. There is a lusty unruliness to this work that sets Rauschenberg apart from his more calculating peers Johns and Warhol. We are distant enough from Pop art now to see "Barge," his thirty-two-foot-long magnum opus of the period, as an everlasting work; its grand scale is related to Pollock and its brilliant mark-making conjures Twombly, but it remains vintage Rauschenberg. Through March 17. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—Forty works of art from Oceania (mostly from the Sepik and Ramu river basins in New Guinea), including three-inch-long fishhooks, three monumental carved-wood "guardians," and a skull rack made of palm and bamboo. Through Feb. 4. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Be Merry & Wise" examines the development of children's books in England from the seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth. Among the many books, manuscripts, and drawings on view are the "History of Tom Thumbe" (1621, the first English folktale in print), Dorothy Kilner's "The Life and Perambulation of a Mouse" (1783), and the third edition of Edward Lear's "Book of Nonsense" (1861). Through Feb. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

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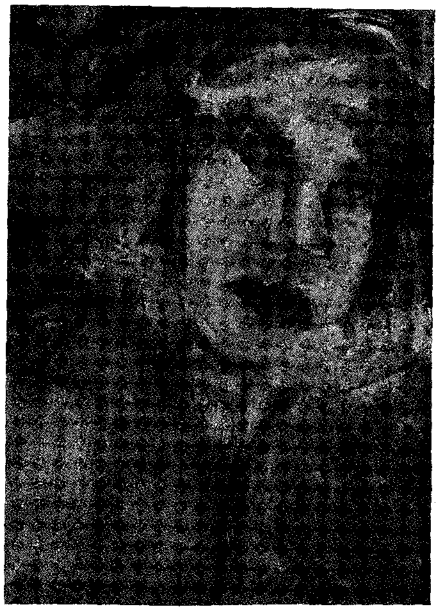


Self-portrait by Grace Hartigan

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"The Cutting Edge" gathers together eighty-six works from the past thirty years for an examination of contemporary, and sometimes non-traditional, American folk art. (Open daily, 9 to 9.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—Through maps, paintings, photographs, and prints, "Within Bohemia's Borders" documents the turbulent history of Greenwich Village from 1830 to 1930. Through Feb. 3. . . . ¶ Forty-five oil paintings by the hundred-year-old Theresa Bernstein, depicting New York City from 1914 to 1930. Through March 31. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A hundred and thirteen master drawings, from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth, by such artists as Poussin, Fragonard, Delacroix, and Cézanne. From the Louis-Antoine Prat collection, in Paris. Through Jan. 20. . . . ¶ Drawings and watercolors by the British Romantic Henry Fuseli (1741-1825). Through March 24. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Rhetorical Image." An impressively ambitious exhibition that brings together artists of different generations from Eastern and Western Europe, North America, Brazil, and Japan. The premise of the show is that the art in all its diversity was created as a means of resistance to accepted expressions of power. The curator, Milena Kalinovska, favors some of today's more full-bodied political art, the kinds that have a strong sense of poetry and are thus not trapped by their own ideologies. But somehow the work doesn't look very good here. For example, both Lothar Baumgarten's impeccably designed word installation—about native Americans and the railroads that displaced them—and Lawrence Weiner's equally exquisite wordwork, which have always shone in distinctive architectural settings, are here somewhat diminished by their arbitrary placement. Even so, the exhibition and its catalogue are worth the effort if only for the cross-pollination they encourage. Think about Braco Dimitrijevic's banner of a non-famous person, with its comments on the Communist world's cult of personality, in relation to Muntadas's attempts to dismantle a capitalist embodiment of power with his "Limousine Project." Or compare the philosophy of On Kawara's date painting with that of Félix González-Torres's pile of red, white, and blue wrapped candy. Or consider Krzysztof Wodiczko's potent light projections in conjunction with Judith Barry's videotaped stories of immigrants' attempts to negotiate their identities. Through Feb. 3. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"On Paper" examines the history of papermaking, from its invention in China through John Cage's edible paper. Through March 2. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ Manuscript fragments, letters, first editions, photographs, and illustrations are all part of "Charles Dickens: His Life and Work." (Berg Collection. Open daily, except Sundays and Thursdays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Sigmar Polke—An essential show of key sixties works in mixed mediums, probably unfamiliar to many American viewers, by this most mercurial of contemporary German artists. The "Potato House" has been reconstructed, along with other ephemeral masterpieces. (This is the conceptual Polke.) Through Jan. 19. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

"The British Imagination: Twentieth-Century Paintings, Sculptures, and Drawings"—A show in which, even in the most ostensibly abstract art, one detects an obsession with the figure and with narrative. Works by twenty-two artists are included, beginning with the early moderns Walter Sickert and Gwen John, and culminating with some of the best-known English painters working today, including Bacon, Freud, Kossoff, Auerbach, Hodgkin, and Hockney. Through Jan. 12. (Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St.)

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

Christian Boltanski—The general form of Boltanski's work, with its overwhelming funerary aura, has become pretty familiar by now, but it has fresh impact every time. This new ten-piece installation, "The Dead Swiss," is in a sense an inversion of his past works about exterminated Jews and the children of murderers in that it sets forth a preposterous proposition: neutrality about death. The central component is a three-sided building of stacked, worn biscuit tins that form a dead-end corridor so narrow one can barely enter it. Lights arc over the two walls, forming a low-wattage roof. The boxlike structures, each of which features a picture of a dead Swiss, are arranged in an ostensibly neutral—or minimalistic—way. But the installation is nonetheless loaded with references: to the cemetery, the archive of endless documents, the warehouse of stacked goods, the concrete-block bunker, the cul-de-sac. Through Jan. 19. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Willem de Kooning and **Jean Dubuffet** (1901-85)—An exceptionally strong and coherent exhibition of paintings, mostly from the fifties, and all of women, by the two masters. For de Kooning, Woman tends to be a frightening though rather familiar bourgeoise: the floozy as Mother. To Dubuffet, she is the eternal archaic mystery—yes, the "Other," which rhymes with . . . —but a benign one really, more like the total *maman*. Through Jan. 19. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Egon Schiele (1890-1918)—This surprisingly moving show of works on paper indicates that Schiele is the exemplary Expressionist. Almost all of his work is twisted compositionally and conveys bodily angst, and his sexual renderings are among the most intimate, confrontational, *maudits*, and beautiful. His stringy teen-age Sapphos and Törlesses, and his neurasthenic aesthetes, may make you think that the very flesh of his subjects is being consumed by uneasy desires. Through Jan. 12. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

Richard Tuttle—In the nineteen-seventies Tuttle became the master of installation by wedding his very simple objects—an octagon of paper or a slant-edged piece of wood, for example—to walls so that object and support, or art and environment, were inseparable. For his current show, on both floors of Blum Helman, he has made objects that look more independent—very beautiful, humbly framed watercolors of marks, and almost incidental Constructivistic constructions of bits of raw wood—but that are installed in an adamantly environmental way, on walls that have been painted with brushy horizontal bands of blue, green, and yellow. Through Jan. 12. (20 W. 57th St.)

Short List—**Grace Hartigan,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. (starts Jan. 10); **Hans Hoffman,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 26); **Frederick Kiesler** and **Leonard Storez,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 2); **Walter Pichler** and **Arnulf Rainer,** Ulysses, 41 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 19); **George Sugarman,** Washburn, 41 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 19).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Jean Lowe / Gary Panter—A very indulgent, cliché-riddled installation of a kitschy rococo interior, unredeemed by the irony of its title, “[illegible] Dilettante’s Conversation on the Topics of Anthropocentrism and Western Consumerism.” / Paintings on paper of such East Village juvenilia as dinosaurs, big-busted babes, cartoon creatures, rockers, and assorted others by the man who designed the superlative set for “Pee-wee’s Playhouse.” Through Jan. 12. (Gracie Mansion Gallery, [illegible]32 Broadway.)

Keith Haring (1958-90) and **Jean-Michel Basquiat** (1960-88)—There are those who contend that Haring was not much of a painter; the aim of this show is to prove otherwise. The impressive grouping includes some of the artist’s most exuberant paintings on tarp—the ones that display a sense of mission as well as a fine command of the drippy brush—along with several painted objects, such as a standing Nefertiti-like sarcophagus. In the few works where Haring has attempted to be more pictorial as opposed to pictographic, his charismatic hold seems to evaporate and his limitations as a painter become clear. Basquiat, on the other hand, never had to prove himself a painter. He seemed to spring forth fully formed, with a masterly, scratchy hand that made him the most commanding scribbler since Twombly, and an unerring compositional sense that allowed him to put the list, the X, and the smudge in exactly the right place. The show ends on a bittersweet note with a late painting by Haring in his earlier style. It depicts a pile of crowns, the kind Basquiat drew in his Samo days. It is a reverential portrait of Basquiat, although it is unclear whether the pile is an accumulation of trophies or of refuse. Through Feb. 9. (Shafrazi, 130 Prince St.)

Agnes Martin—A group of large paintings with horizontal slate-gray stripes that are much bolder and more hard-edged—less landscapey too—than before. They are handsome but puzzling. Has the reclusive Martin, who lives in New Mexico, been thinking about cities? Or about Southwestern storms? Through Jan. 12. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

Mario Merz—For several decades, Merz has been using his neon Fibonacci numbers in all sorts of works, ranging in spirit from aggressively male to poetically vulnerable. The piece in this show is one of the simplest, and a bit of a cross between the two poles. It consists of a twenty-one-unit sequence of the numbers, in a diagonal line, each resting on a brick of plastic-wrapped clay. The clay has an appealing transformative presence—in a symbolic, Beuysian way—but the work’s installation on a roped-off red linoleum floor makes it all unnecessarily coy. Through Jan. 26. (SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St.)

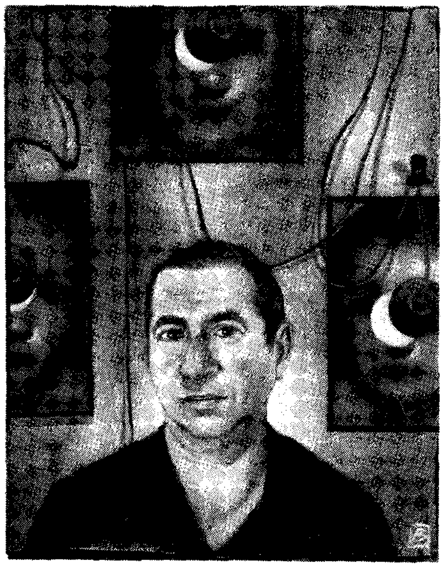
Frank Stella—Large sculptures that look like heaps of partially compacted metallic junk after the fallout and suggest too much late-night-movie viewing. They are impressive for their monstrous scale—several are so huge that they require massive steel buttresses to support them—but for little else. Through Jan. 26. (65 Thompson Street Gallery.)

David Wojnarowicz—This artist did not receive much attention until he contracted AIDS and began making art that eloquently expressed his anger at our society and the way it deals with the disease. But, as this retrospective exhibition of paintings and painted objects makes clear, Wojnarowicz has been practicing his own form of guerrilla politics from the start. If you expect his paintings to open a discussion about painting, you are certain to be disappointed; but if you view them as a kind of magical visual poetry, you are likely to find a strange, disturbing, and horrifically beautiful world. A look at some of his writing, a few examples of which appear in the catalogue, could serve as a starting point. Wojnarowicz began his artistic life on the street, but, unlike his peers Haring and Holzer, he chose the streets because he grew up on them. There is something of the wild child to his work—much of it fixates on such boy imagery as dinosaurs, skeletons, machines, and sweaty sex. As Wojnarowicz’s illness has brought the work a greater urgency and forced him into the larger public eye, the spirit of the boy has remained, bolstered in some odd way by wisdom. His fierce independence is the source of the work’s strength. Through Jan. 19. (Exit Art, 578 Broadway.)

Short List—**Deborah Butterfield,** Thorp, 103 Prince St. (through Jan. 19); **Bruce Kurland,** Munroe, 130 Prince St. (through Jan. 19); **Helmut Middendorf,** Nosei, 100 Prince St. (through Jan. 12); **Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen,** Castelli, 420 West Broadway (through Jan. 12); **David Parrish,** Meisel, 141 Prince St. (through Jan. 25); **Alan Scarritt,** Lorence-Monk, 578 Broadway (through Jan. 26); **Robert Watts,** Castelli, 578 Broadway (through Jan. 12).

OTHER GALLERIES

David Hammons—A wonderful retrospective, at P.S. 1, of works made over the past twenty years by this extraordinary, no-longer-overlooked artist. Included are a new installation called “Jesus Is the Light,” in which tiny crucifixes dangling from the ceiling glow in the dark, accompanied by a soul-cleansing Aretha Franklin tape; the controversial 1986 billboard painting, “How You Like Me Now,” of a bleached, blonded, and blue-eyed Jesse Jackson; a large tapestry, titled “Flying Carpet,” that is covered with actual fried-chicken parts and reminded us of work by other contemporary orchestrators of culture’s debris, most notably Cady Noland and the Belgian Guillaume Bijl; two standing 1990 sculptures, titled “Rocky” and “Esquire,” made of plant stands with head-shaped stones adorned with honest-to-God Afro-American hair; and a spectacular series of rafters-high basketball-hoop constructions, including a Tramp-style hoop made of bottle caps and another, titled “High Falutin’,” that is part chandelier. Through Feb. 10. . . . ¶ The rest of this contemporary-arts institution, perhaps the only one in town to inspire a sense of aesthetic adventurousness, is also in great, full form right now. In addition to the Hammons retrospective, you will find an exhibition, curated by Zdenka Gabalova, titled “Three Artists from Bohemia,” with work by Thomas Ruller (a cross between endurance, installation, and body art), Ivan Kafka (metaphysical neo-Dada sculptures), and the especially talented Vladimir Kokolia, whose wallful of Expressionist-symbolist drawings are not to be missed. The basement and attic of this big funky building have been given over to various site-specific works. In the attic, which is really tricky, are a series of sharply realized and gently confrontational installations by Maura Sheehan, Kim Jones, Renee Green, Patrick Ireland, and Lawrence Weiner. Through Feb. 10. (46-01 21st St., Long Island City. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)


Christian Boltanski

PHOTOGRAPHY

We have been looking at “Paul Strand,” the stately monograph published by Aperture and the National Gallery of Art, in Washington, since it came out last month. The reproductions, crafted by Richard Benson, are so fine that you could hang the pages on your walls. Each plate is a victory of tone, detail, and texture, a celebration of Strand’s perfectionism. In Strand’s meditations on people, architecture, and nature, in various places around the world, you can witness his exacting rendering of the complexities that can be understood through simplicity.

Still, despite the luxurious quality of the book (it’s so pristine you want to wash your hands before opening it), and despite Strand’s own purity—especially stunning when he’s capturing forms in white—there’s that haunting emptiness. It always surprises us. Somehow, we think the beauty of his pictures will fill our heart, but instead it leaves us disappointed. Perhaps that’s why of all the photographs in this book (which accompanies a travelling exhibition, now in Washington) the one that we keep returning to is a shot of Strand and his third wife, Hazel, taken by Jerome Leibling. This image, printed in the afterword, shows the Strands sitting on a bench in their garden in Orgeval, France, in 1974, two years before Strand died. The personal nature of this picture and the narrative that is instantly apparent—two people in their later years in a relationship that has palpable dynamics—are what draw us. In the couple’s body language you can feel their connection to each other, and how at home they are under a tree that’s been around for centuries. The image has a flesh-and-blood quality that the “masterpieces” lack.

“New York . . . When It Was Fun!”—A show that’s a call to die-hard New Yorkers and to those who think “the city’s a nice place to visit, but. . . .” On view are photos of goings on about town from the eighteen-eighties through the nineteen-fifties—old favorites, surprises, and pictures that capture the spirit of a place that invites so many people to come and invent themselves. Where else but New York would we find such graffiti as “I protest everything, including my existence and especially yours”—a chalk-written declaration that fills Esther Bubley’s picture from 1940? Where else would one see a snappily dressed goose checking out a postcard stand? This shot, of course, is from the town’s most headline-oriented chronicler, Weegee. Another photograph by Weegee in the show will please those who feel that New York gets an unfair rap. It’s of a painted wood sign that reads “New York Is a Friendly Town.” Through Jan. 12. (Photofind, 138 Spring St.)

Short List—**Ansel Adams,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6; through Feb. 3); **Bruce of Los Angeles,** Wessel O’Connor, 580 Broadway (through Jan. 12); **Keith Carter,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (opens at noon on Saturdays, through Jan. 12); **Irving Penn,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 19); **Eliot Porter,** Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through Jan. 12); **Ezra Stoller,** Seagram Building, fourth floor, 375 Park Ave., at 52nd St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through Jan. 25); **Raymond Voinquel,** Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through Jan. 26).

MUSIC

HERE is something we can't quite explain: in our television-dominated age, when everyone's attention span is supposed to be reduced, concert audiences are endorsing longer programs and longer unbroken spans within them. It was once considered quite daring for a singer to offer Schubert's complete "Winterreise," and doubly so to give it without intermission; this was true as recently as the mid-nineteen-fifties. Today such presentations occur about three times a season in New York. It is quite unusual to hear any of Chopin's preludes in a recital without hearing the whole set of twenty-four, and, come to think of it, we rarely hear his waltzes without half an evening of them. It's no longer startling when in the same season two pianists, well or little known, propose all the Beethoven sonatas in a series of programs. We have had integral cycles of the Prokofiev sonatas and the Shostakovich quartets; the Emerson has given all six of Bartók's quartets in a single evening. Cuts in Wagner are nearly a thing of the past, and even Verdi is more and more often played complete.

And then there are the unaccompanied suites and sonatas of Bach. In the nineteenth century and earlier in our own, these were known but were considered anthologies, not concert works. The great Leopold Auer, in "Violin Playing as I Teach It" (now available in an inexpensive Dover paperback), recommended that "selected movements" from them be taken up at a certain point in study; a movement or two might be played in public now and again by a violinist or cellist. It was thought extraordinary when Pablo Casals began to play whole suites in his concerts; today it is a rare cello recital that lacks one, and we have heard several cellists traverse the whole set of six in two evenings.

All this comes to mind because Yo-Yo Ma is about to give us all six in *one* evening (with a dinner break), on January 13 at Carnegie Hall. Have advances in taste and musicology rendered performers and audiences readier to concentrate for long periods? Have minimalism and Muzak prepared us to take our Wagner and Bach in trancelike submission, or to treat them as elevated background music for unrelated contemplation? We do not know, but at last report Carnegie's ticket buyers were giving every indication of acquiescence in Mr. Ma's plan.

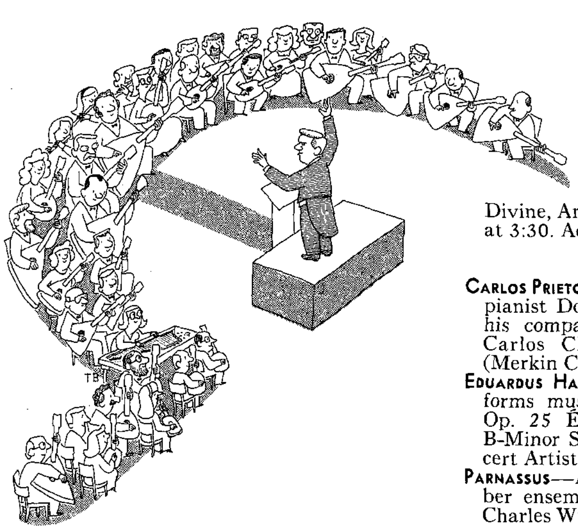
(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5440.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**andrea chénier,** with Maria Gulegina, Lando Bartolini, and Sherrill Milnes; conducted by Julius Rudel. (Jan. 7 at 8.) . . . **faust,** with Diana Soviero, Susan Quittmeyer, Neil Rosenshein, and Samuel Ramey; Thomas Fulton. (Jan. 8 and Jan. 12 at 8.) . . . With Diana Soviero, Diane Kesling, Richard Leech, and Samuel Ramey; Thomas Fulton. (Jan. 16 at 8.) . . . **rigoletto,** with Hei-Kyung Hong, Richard Leech, and Juan Pons; Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (Jan. 9 at 8 and Jan. 12 at 1.) . . . **die zauberflöte,** a new production, staged by Guus Mostart. With Kathleen Battle, Luciana Serra, Francisco Araiza, Manfred Hemm, and Kurt Moll; James Levine. (Jan. 10 at 7 and Jan. 14 at 8.) . . . **boris godunov,** with Stefania Toczyska, Vladimir Popov, Sergei Koptchak, and Paul Plishka; Christian Badea. (Jan. 11 and Jan. 15 at 8.)

Opera Orchestra of New York—A concert performance of Donizetti's "Roberto Devereux," with soprano Mara Zampieri, mezzo-soprano Stella Zambalis, tenor Fernando de la Mora, and baritone Vladimir Chernov; Eve Queler conducts. (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 9 at 8.)

"Orfeo ed Euridice"—A period-instrument rendering of Gluck's 1762 masterpiece, featuring soprano Tracey Mitchell and countertenor Derek Lee Ragin. Bart Folse directs Opera Quotannis in its first staged production. (Church of St. Paul the Apostle, Columbus Ave. at 59th St. Jan. 13 at 8. For information about tickets, call 928-4632.)



Andreyev Balalaika Orchestra

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Charles Dutoit conducts Schumann's Fourth Symphony, Kodály's "Variations on a Hungarian Folksong," and Dutilleux's "Tout un Monde Lointain . . . ," with Lynn Harrell as cello soloist. (Avery Fisher Hall. Jan. 9-12 and Jan. 15, all at 8.)

New York Pops—Skitch Henderson conducts an evening of Gershwin, with Bobby Short and Tania Lee taking turns at the piano. (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 11 at 8.)

Andreyev Balalaika Orchestra of the U.S.S.R.—The last time this ensemble came to town (in 1911) their tour was underwritten by Czar Nicholas II. Eighty years later, the orchestra returns with Dmitri Khokhlov conducting its sixty-five members, who play *balalaikas, dolmas, gulis,* and other instruments. Bass Gleb Nikolsky solos in a suite of Russian folk songs. (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 12 at 8.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Gerard Schwarz conducts Cherubini's only symphony, and mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne interprets arias by Handel and Mozart, as well as the première of a new work by Lowell Liebermann ("The Domain of Arnheim," based on a story by Poe). (92nd Street Y. Jan. 12 at 8 and Jan. 13 at 3.)

Jupiter Symphony—Jens Nygaard conducts a program of Mozart, Mendelssohn (his "Peter Cornelius" March), José Serebrier, and Milhaud (his Cello Concerto No. 1, with soloist Richard Hirschl). (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 14 at 8.)

Manhattan Chamber Orchestra—Richard Auldon Clark conducts a twentieth-century program, including works by Otto Luening, Karel Husa, and David Amram (all of whom are expected to be present). (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Jan. 16 at 8.)

Juilliard Orchestra—Stanislaw Skrowaczewski conducts Mahler's Fourth Symphony (with soprano Abbie Furmansky) and Penderecki's Viola Concerto (with Misha Amory). (Avery Fisher Hall. Jan. 16 at 8.)

Musica Sacra—Richard Westenburg directs Monteverdi's "Vespers of 1610." (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 12 at 8.)

Russian Chamber Chorus—Performing Russian Christmas music, ranging from Slavonic chants to works by Tchaikovsky and Taneyev. Nikolai Kachanov directs. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Jan. 13 at 3:30. Admission by contribution.)

RECITALS

Carlos Prieto—The Mexican cellist, assisted by pianist Doris Stevenson, performs music by his compatriots, including Manuel Ponce, Carlos Chávez, and Manuel Enríquez. (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 7 at 8.)

Eduardus Halim—The Indonesian pianist performs music by Bach/Busoni, Chopin (his Op. 25 Études), and Liszt (including his B-Minor Sonata). Presented by Young Concert Artists. (92nd Street Y. Jan. 8 at 8.)

Parnassus—Anthony Korf conducts the chamber ensemble in music by Milton Babbitt, Charles Wuorinen, and Will Ogdon; and mezzo-soprano Charlotte Hellekant joins the group for Prokofiev's "Five Songs of Anna Akhmatova" and the première of Miriam Gideon's "Five Songs from the Greek." (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 8 at 8.)

Lars Anders Tomter—The Norwegian violist, accompanied by Leif Ove Andsnes, performs music by Nielsen, Britten, Brahms, and others. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Jan. 8 at 8.)

Harvey Shapiro—Cello, with pianist Jonathan Feldman, performing sonatas by Rachmaninoff and Barber, as well as Schumann's "Adagio and Allegro, Op. 70." (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Jan. 9 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 874-7515.)

Sierra Wind Quintet—In its New York début, the Nevada-based ensemble performs a twentieth-century program of works by Barney Childs, Thelonious Monk, Mel Powell, Alvin Etler, and György Ligeti. (Weill Recital Hall. Jan. 11 at 8.)

Bargemusic—A quartet consisting of Ik-Hwan Bae and Christiaan Bor (playing violins and violas), Fred Sherry (cello), and Eck-Choo Moon (piano) performs a Handel trio sonata and piano quartets by Schumann and Fauré. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Jan. 10 at 7:30 and Jan. 13 at 4.)

Mexican Chamber Music—Joel Thome conducts the Brooklyn Philharmonic Chamber Ensemble in the final concert of the season's Mexican music festival, spotlighting seven contemporary composers: Salvador Contreras, Manuel De Elias, Manuel Enríquez, Mario Kuri Aldana, Mario Lavista, Francisco Núñez, and Hector Quintanar. (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 10 at 8.)

Julian Gray and Ronald Pearl—Duo-guitarists, performing works by De Falla, Fernando Sor, Domenico Scarlatti, and several contemporary composers. (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 12 at 8.)

Dawn Upshaw—The soprano, with pianist James Levine, presents a program of Wolf, Richard Strauss, Shostakovich, and Rachmaninoff. (Alice Tully Hall. Jan. 13 at 3.)

New York Philharmonic Ensembles—Performing Mozart's Oboe Quartet (with Joseph Robinson), Reger's Clarinet Quintet (with Stanley Drucker), and Brahms' String Sextet, Op. 18 (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 13 at 3.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Music by Mozart, Brahms, and Szymanowski, played by a string-and-winds ensemble. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Jan. 13 at 3.)

North/South Consonance—Contemporary chamber music by six New York composers, including William Mayer's "Messages," for flute and piano (in which the composer accompanies soloist Lisa Hansen). (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Jan. 13 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Electric Diamond—Musical technologists Stuart Diamond and Don Slepian present arrangements of works by Bach, Handel, Mussorgsky, and others (as well as several original compositions), performing them "live" on a Steinway concert grand, a Penta electronic keyboard (designed by Mr. Slepian), and a Lyricon Wind Synthesizer (which transforms human breath into electronic tones). (Steinway Hall, 109 W. 57th St. Jan. 13 at 4:30. No tickets necessary.)

TAKING OFF

As a collector of toy trains, Michael Klein has not only not *put away the things of a child but has found them inspiration for a most grownup venture. As owner of an art gallery in SoHo (at 594 Broadway), he invited three artists—Dennis Oppenheim, Jon Kessler, and Chris Burden—to create works related to toy trains for a show running through January 26. "The idea was to spark the imagination of artists—this is in no way some kind of* statement*—and to do something fun for a change," Klein said.*

Oppenheim's "Woman with Halo" is, appropriately, a floor piece: a minimalist, cookie-cutter-shaped figure made of small chalk blocks painted in Day-Glo colors, whose halo is a train track plied by an N-scale locomotive. Kessler, who is known for his kinetic works, found the theme a natural. His "Steam in Stereo" focusses on a larger, L-scale locomotive mesmerizingly circling a track and activating—somewhat like a horse-propelled trapeze in a circus—a phonograph record of steam-engine sounds. It is Burden, however, in "A Front, a Forced Perspective," who captures the miniature world and nostalgic aura of toy trains. On the top of four adjoining metal cabinets is what at first resembles the clutter found in the corner of a small boy's room: a German toy freight car and a shunter, a miniature log cabin, boats and bridges, and First World War toy soldiers. Yet they are all arranged in storytelling fashion, forming a complex little diorama that evokes not only childhood and fantasy but devastation and decay. "Even the dust is meant to be a part of it," Mr. Klein explained, "showing the accretion of time."

Yo-Yo Ma—Playing all six of J. S. Bach's suites for unaccompanied cello. (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 13 at 5:00.)

Ton Koopman—The Dutch organist (also noted as a harpsichordist and as the conductor of the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra) performs works ranging from the early seventeenth century (by Correa D'Arrauxo and Frescobaldi) to later baroque compositions by Froberger, Buxtehude, Cabanilles, François Couperin, and Bach. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. Jan. 13 at 5. For information about tickets, call 860-2077.)

Amadeus Winds—The period-instrument group performs Mozart and Beethoven, with guest fortepianist Steven Lubin. (Frick Collection, E. 70th St. 288-0700. Jan. 13 at 5.)

Kerry Mc Dermott—The violinist, with pianist Margo Garret, performs sonatas by Schubert, Schumann, and Fauré, as well as works of Ravel and Schoenberg (his Op. 47 "Fantasy"). (Weill Recital Hall. Jan. 13 at 5:30.)

Camerata Bariloche of Buenos Aires—The chamber orchestra, led by concertmaster Elias Khayat, performs concertos by Alessandro Marcello and Telemann; Ginastera's "Impresiones de la Puna" (with flute soloist Claudio Barile); and orchestral works of Mozart and Suk. (Carnegie Hall. Jan. 15 at 8.)

Concerts Artists Guild—The organization, which is devoted to encouraging emerging artists, is honored on its fortieth birthday with performances by ten of its alumni, including mezzo-soprano Mary Ann Hart, violinist Maria Bachmann, cellist Semyon Fridman, horn player David Jolley, harpsichordist Elaine Comparone, and pianist Jon Klibonoff. (Merkin Concert Hall. Jan. 15 at 8.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

"Highlights in Jazz"—Jay McShann, Doc Cheatham, Kenny Davern, Frank Tate, and Jack Williams. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Jan. 10 at 8.)

"Griots of West Africa"—Papa Susso and Abdou Rahman Mangara, with their ensembles. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. Jan. 11 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Marty Ehrlich Ensemble—Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. Jan. 11 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

Brave Old World—Washington Square Church. Jan. 12 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

Haywood Henry Quartet—St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Jan. 13 at 7:30. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

Harlem Spiritual Ensemble—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Jan. 14 at 8.

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Rangers—Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, Jan. 7. . . . ¶ Vs. the St. Louis Blues, Jan. 9. . . . ¶ Vs. the Hartford Whalers, Jan. 13. . . . ¶ Vs. the Edmonton Oilers, Jan. 15. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Minnesota North Stars, Jan. 8. . . . ¶ Vs. the Detroit Red Wings, Jan. 12. . . . ¶ Vs. the Boston Bruins, Jan. 15. (Game time, 7:35.)

Devils—Vs. the St. Louis Blues, Jan. 8 at 7:45. . . . ¶ Vs. the Edmonton Oilers, Jan. 12 at 1:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Los Angeles Kings, Jan. 14 at 7:45. . . . ¶ Vs. the Chicago Black Hawks, Jan. 16 at 7:45.

Knicks—Vs. the Boston Celtics, Jan. 8. . . . ¶ Vs. the Indiana Pacers, Jan. 10. . . . ¶ Vs. the Atlanta Hawks, Jan. 12. (Game time, 7:30.)

Nets—Vs. the Dallas Mavericks, Jan. 7 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Portland Trail Blazers, Jan. 13 at 7. . . . ¶ Vs. the Golden State Warriors, Jan. 15 at 7:30.

(The Rangers and the Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Devils and the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900. The Giants play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-8111.)

CHAMPIONSHIP—FOOTBALL

The Giants drew a bye for the first round. It was unknown at press time whether their opponent in the second round would be the Eagles, the Bears, or the Redskins. Jan. 12 at 12:30.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Fabric Gardens"—An exhibition of thirty quilts, all depicting horticultural themes, which runs through Feb. 6. (Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave. Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 4.)

Boats—Gift shoppers can look in at the eighty-first New York National Boat Show, which is billed this year as a place for "one-stop shopping"—sort of like a nautical mall. Yachts, fishing boats, radar, rowing sculls, engines, charts, and floating hats will be among the marine merchandise available. (Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, Eleventh Ave. between 34th and 39th Sts. Jan. 5-13. For information, call 684-6622.)

Walking Tours and Field Trips—Jan. 12 at 11: A long, educational subway ride, led by the Central Park Rangers. Meets at Central Park West and 59th St. (bring two tokens). . . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 2: A walk through the woods up at Wave Hill. (W. 249th St. and Independence Ave., the Bronx. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 2: A walk through Astoria, Queens, with a stop for Greek food; sponsored by Adventure on a Shoestring. Call 265-2663 for information.

Talks—Jan. 13 at 8:15: Carolyn Heilbrun moderates a panel of female biographers Susan Quinn, Dierdre Bair, and Elisabeth Young-Bruehl. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.) . . . ¶ Jan. 15 at 8: Peter Ackroyd talks about his new biography of Dickens. (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. No tickets necessary.)

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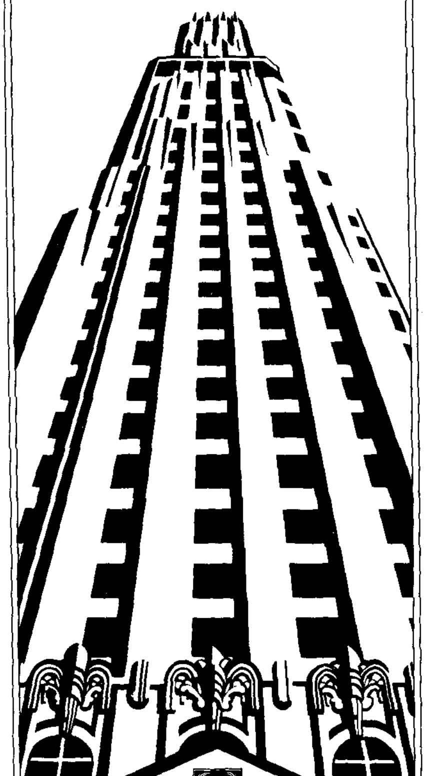

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 16.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: Through Jan. 10: "To Sleep with Anger" (†). From Jan. 11: "Not Without My Daughter" (directed by Brian Gilbert), with Sally Field.
Theatre 2: "Come See the Paradise" (Alan Parker), with Dennis Quaid and Tamlyn Tomita.
Theatre 3: "Vincent & Theo" (†).
Theatre 4: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.
Theatre 5: "The Russia House" (†).
Theatre 6: "Metropolitan" (Whit Stillman).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Jan. 10: (Separate admissions) "Company" (1970, D. A. Pennebaker), with Dean Jones, Barbara Barrie, and George Coe; and "She's Been Away" (1989, Peter Hall), with Peggy Ashcroft, Geraldine James, and James Fox.
From Jan. 11: "Diego Rivera: I Paint What I See" (Mary Lance and Eric Breitbart), a documentary; "Frida" (Paul Leduc; in Spanish), with Ofelia Medina; and "Rodrigo D: No Future" (Victor Manuel Gaviria; a Colombian film, in Spanish).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 2: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis.
Theatre 3: "The Bonfire of the Vanities" (†).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "The Russia House" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dances with Wolves" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Godfather Part III" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Godfather Part III" (†).
Theatre 5: "Dances with Wolves" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Jan. 10: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis. From Jan. 11: "Not Without My Daughter" (Brian Gilbert), with Sally Field.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Bonfire of the Vanities" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Sheltering Sky" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Field" (Jim Sheridan), with Richard Harris, John Hurt, Tom Berenger, Brenda Fricker, and Sean Bean.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "The Godfather Part III" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Godfather Part III" (†).
Theatre 3: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Awakenings" (Penny Marshall), with Robert De Niro and Robin Williams.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"GoodFellas" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "The Bonfire of the Vanities" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Bonfire of the Vanities" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Come See the Paradise" (Alan Parker), with Dennis Quaid and Tamlyn Tomita.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Cyrano de Bergerac" (Jean-Paul Rappeneau, in French), with Gérard Depardieu.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.
Theatre 2: "Kindergarten Cop."

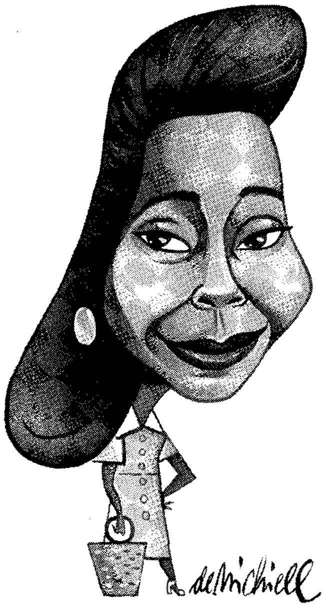
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 2: "Awakenings" (Penny Marshall), with Robert De Niro and Robin Williams.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Green Card" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (†).
Theatre 3: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis.
Theatre 2: Through Jan. 10: "Vincent & Theo" (†). From Jan. 11: "Not Without My Daughter" (Brian Gilbert), with Sally Field.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Havana" (†).



Whoopi Goldberg in "The Long Walk Home"

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "The Russia House" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Godfather Part III" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Hamlet" (Franco Zeffirelli), with Mel Gibson, Glenn Close, Alan Bates, and Paul Scofield.

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Dances with Wolves" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"The Godfather Part III" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.
Theatre 2: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.
Theatre 2: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin, Joe Pesci, Daniel Stern, John Heard, Roberts Blossom, and Catherine O'Hara.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Jan. 15: "Solovki Power" (1988, directed by Marina Goldovskaya; in Russian), a documentary. From Jan. 16: Six new films from Europe, South America, and Asia.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: Through Jan. 10: "Muhammad Ali, The Greatest" (1964 and 1974, William Klein), a documentary. From Jan. 11: "Privilege" (Yvonne Rainer).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Hamlet" (Franco Zeffirelli), with Mel Gibson, Glenn Close, Alan Bates, and Paul Scofield.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "The Godfather Part III" (†).
Theatre 2: "Havana" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Akira Kurosawa's Dreams" (†).
Theatre 2: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian).
Theatre 3: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 4: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: "Havana" (†).
Theatre 3: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.
Theatre 4: "The Bonfire of the Vanities" (†).
Theatre 5: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 6: "Kindergarten Cop."
Theatre 7: "Come See the Paradise" (Alan Parker), with Dennis Quaid and Tamlyn Tomita.
Theatre 8: "The Long Walk Home" (Richard Pearce), with Sissy Spacek and Whoopi Goldberg.
Theatre 9: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Hidden Agenda" (Ken Loach), with Frances McDormand.
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "The Rescuers Down Under" (Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.
Theatre 3: "Avalon" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through Jan. 10: "The Russia House" (†).
From Jan. 11: "Green Card" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Hidden Agenda" (Ken Loach), with Frances McDormand.
Theatre 2: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 3: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.
Theatre 4: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian).
Theatre 5: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 6: "Postcards from the Edge" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Edward Scissorhands" (†).

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Sheltering Sky" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"The Long Walk Home" (Richard Pearce), with Sissy Spacek and Whoopi Goldberg.

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"The Long Walk Home" (Richard Pearce), with Sissy Spacek and Whoopi Goldberg.

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Alice" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Vincent & Theo" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Dances with Wolves" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Awakenings" (Penny Marshall), with Robert De Niro and Robin Williams.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "The Nasty Girl" (Michael Verhoeven; in German), with Lena Stolze.
Theatre 2: "Freeze—Die—Come to Life" (Vitaly Kanevski; in Russian).
Theatre 3: "Jesus of Montreal" (Denys Arcand; in French), with Lothaire Bluteau.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Havana" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.

Theatre 2: Through Jan. 10: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis. From Jan. 11: "Not Without My Daughter" (Brian Gilbert), with Sally Field.
Theatre 3: "The Russia House" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Bonfire of the Vanities" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Godfather Part III" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Godfather Part III" (†).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 2: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.
Theatre 2: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (directed by Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: "Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.
Theatre 3: "The Bonfire of the Vanities" (†).
Theatre 4: "Misery."
Theatre 5: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 6: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through Jan. 10: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.
From Jan. 11: "Not Without My Daughter" (Brian Gilbert), with Sally Field.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: Through Jan. 10: "Ghost" (Jerry Zucker), with Patrick Swayze, Demi Moore, and Whoopi Goldberg. From Jan. 11: "The Russia House" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.
Theatre 3: Through Jan. 10: (Matinées only) "The Rescuers Down Under"; and (evenings only) "Rocky V" (John G. Avildsen), with Sylvester Stallone. From Jan. 11: "Ghost."

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"The Godfather Part III" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 2: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen.
Theatre 2: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Jan. 7: "Anna and the King of Siam" (1946, directed by John Cromwell), with Irene Dunne, Rex Harrison, Linda Darnell, and Lee J. Cobb; and "A Guy Named Joe" (1943, Victor Fleming), with Spencer Tracy, Dunne, Ward Bond, and Van Johnson.
Jan. 8-9: "The White Cliffs of Dover" (1944, Clarence Brown), with Irene Dunne, Alan Marshall, Van Johnson, Peter Lawford, and Frank Morgan; and "Love Affair" (1939, Leo McCarey), with Dunne, Charles Boyer, and Maria Ouspenskaya.
Jan. 10-12: "I Remember Mama" (†); and "Theodora Goes Wild" (1936, Richard Boleslavsky), with Irene Dunne, Melvyn Douglas, and Thomas Mitchell.
Jan. 13-14: "Show Boat" (1951, George Sidney), with Kathryn Grayson, Howard Keel, Ava Gardner, Joe E. Brown, William Warfield, and Marge and Gower Champion; and "Roberta" (1935, William Seiter), with Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire, Randolph Scott, Helen Westley, and Irene Dunne.
Jan. 15-16: "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" (1952, Henry King), with Gregory Peck, Susan Hayward, and Ava Gardner; and "The Killers" (†).

Cinema Village, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
Through Jan. 8: "The Leopard" (1963, Luchino Visconti; in Italian), with Burt Lancaster, Alain Delon, and Claudia Cardinale.
Jan. 9-12: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio; and "The Little Thief" (1989, Claude Miller; in French).
Jan. 13-15: "The Story of Adèle H." (1975, François Truffaut; in French), with Isabelle Adjani; and "The Soft Skin" (1964, Truffaut; in French), with Jean Desailly, Françoise Dorléac, and Nelly Benedetti.
From Jan. 16: "La Dolce Vita" (1960, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni and Anita Ekberg.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through Jan. 10: "Breathless" (1959, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo.
Jan. 11-15: "Masculine Feminine" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud and Chantal Goya; and "La Chinoise" (†).
From Jan. 16: "Every Man for Himself" (1979, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Isabelle Huppert, Jacques Dutronc, and Nathalie Baye; and "A Letter to Jane" (1972, Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin; in French).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Jan. 7: "The Decameron" (1971, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with Franco Citti, Ninetto Davoli, and Pasolini; and "The Canterbury Tales" (1972, Pasolini; in Italian), with Hugh Griffith, Alan Webb, and Jenny Runacre.
Jan. 8: "The Reckless Moment" (1949, Max Ophuls), with James Mason and Joan Bennett; and "Caught" (1948, Max Ophuls), with Barbara Bel Geddes, Mason, and Robert Ryan.
Jan. 9: "The Cat and the Canary" (1939, Elliott Nugent), with Paulette Goddard, Bob Hope, John Beal, and Douglass Montgomery; and "The Ghost Breakers" (1940, George Marshall), with Goddard, Hope, Paul Lukas, and Richard Carlson.
Jan. 10: "L'Avventura" (1959, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Monica Vitti, Gabriele Ferzetti, and Léa Massari; and "L'Amore" (1948, Roberto Rossellini; in Italian), with Anna Magnani.
Jan. 11-12: "Stardust Memories" (†); and "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex" (1972, Woody Allen), with Allen.
Jan. 13: "Young and Innocent" (1937, Alfred Hitchcock), with Nova Pilbeam and Derrick de Morney; and "Murder" (1930, Hitchcock), with Herbert Marshall and Norah Baring.
Jan. 14: "The Last Metro" (1981, François Truffaut; in French), with Catherine Deneuve, Gérard Depardieu, and Jean Poiret; and "Love on the Run" (1979, Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud, Marie-France Pisier, and Claude Jade.
Jan. 15: "The Petrified Forest" (†); and "The Man Who Came to Dinner" (1942, William Keighley), with Bette Davis, Ann Sheridan, Monty Woolley, Jimmy Durante, and Richard Travis.
Jan. 16: "The Rose Tattoo" (†); and "The Fugitive Kind" (1960, Sidney Lumet), with Marlon Brando, Anna Magnani, and Joanne Woodward.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Jan. 10 at 2:30 and 6: "Track of Stones" (1966, directed by Frank Beyer; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 10 at 3 and 6: "The World Is Watching" (1989, Peter Raymont), a documentary. . . . ¶ Jan. 11 at 2:30: "Looking for Causes" (1990, Dietmar Hochmuth; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 11 at 2:30: "Nanook of the North" (1922, Robert J. Flaherty), a documentary. . . . ¶ Jan. 11 at 6: "Wedding" (1990, Heiko Schier; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 11 at 6: "Sunrise" (1927, F. W. Murnau; silent), with Janet Gaynor and George O'Brien. . . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 2: "Crossing Borders" (1989, Hark Bohm; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 2:30: "Sunrise." . . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 5: "The Architects" (1990, Peter Kahane; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 5: "The Crowd" (1928, King Vidor; silent), with Eleanor Boardman. . . . ¶ Jan. 13 at 2: "Rendezvous in Travers" (1989, Michael Gwisdek; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 13 at 2:30: "The General" (1927, Clyde Bruckman and Buster Keaton; silent), with Keaton. . . . ¶ Jan. 13 at 5: "Blue Eyed" (1989, Reinhard Hauff; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 13 at 5: "The Gold Rush" (1925, Charlie Chaplin; silent), with Chaplin, Mack

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At the Biograph Cinema, Ava Gardner and Gregory Peck in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro"

Swain, and Georgia Hale. . . . ¶ Jan. 14 at 2:30: "Forbidden Love" (1990, Helmut Dziuba; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 14 at 6: "My War" (1990, Harriet Eder and Thomas Kufus; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 15 at 2:30: "In the Splendor of Happiness" (1990, Johann Feindt and Helga Reidemeister), a documentary. . . . ¶ Jan. 15 at 3: "The Crowd." . . . ¶ Jan. 15 at 6: "Miss Lulu Bett" (*1921, William deMille; silent*).

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—Programs about contemporary comedians and people who influenced them. Robert Klein: Jan. 8-12: Excerpts from three Klein television specials and from shows with Carl Reiner, Lenny Bruce, Sid Caesar, Steve Allen, Jonathan Winters, and Alan King. Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15.

Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Jan. 11 at 8, Jan. 12 at 10, and Jan. 13 at 4: Films about New York City by Paul Strand, Francis Thompson, Shirley Clarke, and others. . . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 8:30 and Jan. 13 at 2: Four films by Lane Slate.

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—Jan. 10 at noon: "Primary" (1960) and "Petey and Johnny" (1961).

. . . ¶ Jan. 15 at noon: "The Canterville Ghost" (1944, Jules Dassin), with Charles Laughton, Margaret O'Brien, and Robert Young. . . . ¶ Jan. 15 at 2:30: "The Thief of Bagdad" (*1924, Raoul Walsh; silent*), with Douglas Fairbanks.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—In either the Riklis Theatre or the Warner Communications Screening Room. A program of films for which Gordon Willis was the cinematographer. Jan. 12-13 at 2: "Zelig" (1983, Woody Allen), with Allen and Mia Farrow. . . . ¶ Jan. 12 at 4: "Stardust Memories" (†). . . . ¶ Jan. 13 at 4: "Pennies from Heaven" (1981, Herbert Ross), with Steve Martin and Bernadette Peters.

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—"In Aztlán: The Films of the Chicano Movement, 1969-79." Jan. 9 and Jan. 11-12 at 2: "I Am Joaquin" (1969), "Yo Soy Chicano" (1972, Barry Nye), and "Chicana" (1979, Sylvia Morales). . . . ¶ Jan. 13 and Jan. 15-16 at 2: "Los Vendidos" (1972, George Paul) and "El Corrido: La Carpa de los Rasquachis" (1976, Kur[illegible] Browning).

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—Jan. 11 and Jan. 14 at 6:30: "High and Low" (†).

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(*The following* notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

Akira Kurosawa's Dreams—Not one of its eight segments feels like a real dream. The kind of power that Kurosawa aims for, and intermittently achieves, in this picture is less oneiric than ceremonial. The film is a succession of sweeping dramatic gestures and lofty incantations performed in an atmosphere of hushed solemnity. The second half of "Dreams" is weak: the fifth episode, "Crows," about a fantasy encounter with van Gogh, is a thin conceit; and the remaining three segments are all static, self-conscious, and didactic. *But there's greatness in the film's* first hour. The opening segment, "Sunshine Through the Rain," is the vision of a small child who wanders into a forest and witnesses a wedding procession of foxes; the sequence has a wholly original sense of the rapturous fear and awe we feel when we first come upon the wonders of the natural world. The second episode, "The Peach Orchard," is also lovely (though its mood and pace are too similar to those of the first). The third segment, "The Blizzard," about four men trapped in a snowstorm, is all snow, howling-wind effects, and bleak, undifferentiated vistas of despair, until Kurosawa pulls a miracle out of the white void: a woman in long black hair and diaphanous robes appears to the party's leader as he battles sleep. It's a transcendent image, perhaps the most piercing ever made of the desires that keep people from surrendering to death. And the fourth episode, "The Tunnel," about a man returning from war and encountering his dead comrades, is a brilliant, hypnotic piece of filmmaking. With Akira Terao, who plays the dreamer in six of the segments; Mieko Harada as the Snow Fairy; Martin Scorsese as van Gogh; and Chishu Ryu. Cinematography by Takao Saito and Masaharu Ueda. In Japanese.—T.R. (Reviewed in our *issue of* 9/10/90.) (Quad Cinema.)

Alice—Woody Allen's latest picture is an awkward blend of whimsy and moralizing. The title character, played by Mia Farrow, is a pampered Upper East Side lady-who-lunches. She lives in a huge apartment with her handsome husband (William Hurt), her adorable children, and a staff, and she looks terrific. But her life, the movie tells us, is totally empty and false. A Chinatown doctor (Keye Luke) gives her a variety of herbal remedies to knock the yuppie malaise out of her system. One of them makes her invisible; one makes her irresistible to men; and so on. As these fantasy episodes mount up, Alice begins to see how artificial her life is, how far she's strayed from the pure ideals of her Catholic girlhood, how much more love she needs than she has been getting, and what a revolting piece of Wasp slime her husband is. In the end, the heroine seems, incredibly, to have redeemed herself through self-absorption; the movie doesn't benefit from any such miracle. Although there are more jokes here than in any of Allen's last few features, the picture isn't really a comedy: it's a sermon with gags. The large cast also includes Joe Mantegna, Alec Baldwin, Blythe Danner, Judy Davis, Bob Balaban, and Bernadette Peters (who does a sensational brief turn as a cynical muse).—T.R. (12/31/90) (Loews Fine Arts.)

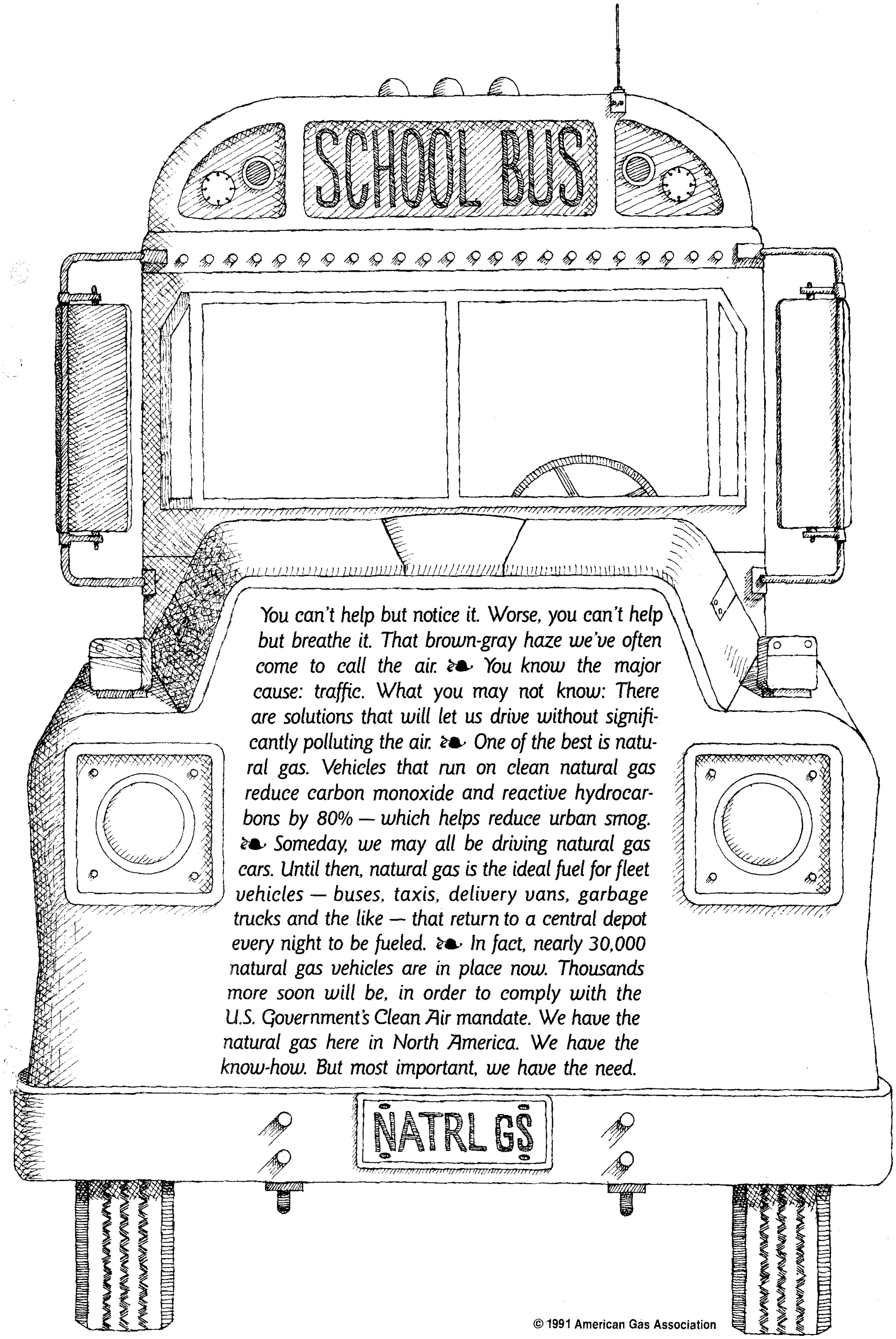
Avalon—In legend, Avalon is an earthly paradise. The writer-director Barry Levinson uses the name as his Rosebud: it's carved into the façade of the castlelike Baltimore apartment house where the five Krichinsky brothers, Jews who immigrated from Eastern Europe before the First World War, make their first American home. In Levinson's view, those early years were a golden age. The film is set mostly during his own childhood, in the late forties, *when his parents move to the sub*urbs, and TV breaks up the clan's social patterns, and the surviving brothers have divided into feuding factions. The scattered fine comic moments don't make up for the wide streak of fuddy-duddyism in the notion that the family used to be the bulwark of the nation's value system. The movie is an elegy to a mythical past, and people emerge from the theatre sniffling. They've been told they're suffering from soul-sickness—the loss of unity, harmony, family music. With Elizabeth Perkins, Aidan Quinn, Kevin Pollak, Armin Mueller-Stahl, and Joan Plowright.—P.K. (10/22/90) (23rd St. West Triplex.)

The Bonfire of the Vanities—With Tom Hanks, Bruce Willis, and Melanie Griffith; directed by Brian De Palma. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

La Chinoise (1967)—The writer-director Jean-Luc Godard's fast, clever political comedy (and elegy) about the late-sixties incorporation of revolutionary heroes and ideas into Pop. The film is made in a new, semi-satirical shorthand; it centers on the terrorist actions of a group of young French Maoists—naïve, *forlorn little ideologues who live out* a Pop version of "The Possessed." Anne Wiazemsky (married at the time to Godard) plays the affectless killer Véronique, a teen-age philosophy student; she and the four other members of her Maoist group share the apartment where most of the movie takes place. They study Marxism-Leninism and chant Chairman Mao's sayings from the Little Red Book like nursery rhymes. Godard's hard-edge visual style is stripped down for speed and wit; he wants you to be able to read the whole picture (and the words) at once. He uses words here in more ways than any other filmmaker has: they're in the dialogue and on the walls, on book jackets and in headlines; they're recited, chanted, shouted, written, broken down; they're in commentaries, quotations, interviews, narration; they're in slogans and emblems and signs. Those who dislike verbal allusions will be irritated, and those who want only straightforward action may be driven wild by Godard's neo-Brechtian displacement devices (his voice on the soundtrack, a cut to Raoul Coutard at the camera) and by his almost novelistic love of digression—his inclusion of anecdotes, of speculations about movie art, and of direct-to-the-camera interviews. The movie is like a speed freak's anticipatory vision of the political horrors to come; it's amazing. With Jean-Pierre Léaud, Juliette Berto, Michel Sémianko, Lex de Bruijn as Kirilov, and Omar Diop as Comrade X. In French.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Jan. 11-15.)

Dances with Wolves—Set during the Civil War, this big Indians-versus-Cavalry epic is like a New Age social-studies lesson. Kevin Costner, who directed and is the star, has an untroubled face and laid-back diction. As Lieutenant Dunbar, a Union officer, he sees that the Sioux have a superior culture and he changes sides. This is a nature-boy movie, a kid's daydream of being an Indian. When Dunbar has become a Sioux named Dances with Wolves, he writes in his journal that he knows for the first time who he really is. Costner has feathers in his hair and feathers in his head. He and his friend Michael Blake (who worked up the material with him in mind and then wrote the novel and the screenplay) are trying to show the last years of the Sioux as an independent nation from the Sioux point of view, and it's probably that sympathy for the Indians that the audience responds to. But Costner is a moviemaking novice: instead of helping us understand the Sioux, he simply makes the Sioux like genial versions of us. This three-hour Western weeper, with its sluggish action and poorly shaped scenes, was made by a bland megalomaniac. (The Indians should have named him Plays with Camera.) Shot in South Dakota; the wide-screen cinematography, by Dean Semier, is spacious and open at times, and there are fine images of buffalo pounding by. With Mary McDonnell, Maury Chaykin, Robert Pastorelli, Graham Greene as Kicking Bird, and Rodney A. Grant as Wind in His Hair.—P.K. (12/17/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews Tower East, and Loews Paramount.)

Edward Scissorhands—A Transylvanian castle rises high in the air out of the end of a bare, flat suburban street. One day, Peg Boggs, the Avon lady (Dianne Wiest, magically daffy), makes a call on the macabre, tumbledown place and discovers an adolescent fairy-tale boy, white-faced Edward (Johnny Depp), with two collections of long sharp shears where his hands should be. (He was created in the castle's kitchen workshop by an aged inventor—Vincent Price, in flashbacks—who died before he could attach the hands he



You can't help but notice it. Worse, you can't help but breathe it. That brown-gray haze we've often come to call the air. ❦ *You know the major cause: traffic. What you may not know: There are solutions that will let us drive without significantly polluting the air.* ❦ *One of the best is natural gas. Vehicles that run on clean natural gas reduce carbon monoxide and reactive hydrocarbons by 80% — which helps reduce urban smog.* ❦ *Someday, we may all be driving natural gas cars. Until then, natural gas is the ideal fuel for fleet vehicles — buses, taxis, delivery vans, garbage trucks and the like — that return to a central depot every night to be fueled.* ❦ *In fact, nearly 30,000 natural gas vehicles are in place now. Thousands more soon will be, in order to comply with the U.S. Government's Clean Air mandate. We have the natural gas here in North America. We have the know-how. But most important, we have the need.*

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had prepared.) Peg invites the boy to come home with her. At first, this movie, directed by Tim Burton, has a lovely comic spirit, but when the suburbanites think Edward is dangerous and turn against him, the material turns into cheesy, plot-centered melodrama. It has a central flaw: the idea of a boy who cuts when he wants to touch is pre-interpreted—he's the pure creative artist who can't be around people because he can't help hurting them; he's the woeful misunderstood kid. Edward is an emasculated Tim Burton; he's Burton saying, "I've always been a sweet guy." (The picture becomes Christmassy and angelic.) With Winona Ryder.—P.K. (12/17/90) (Ziegfeld.)

The Godfather Part III—With Al Pacino, Diane Keaton, Talia Shire, and Andy Garcia; directed by Francis Ford Coppola. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, U. A. East, Art Greenwich Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Loews Astor Plaza.)

GoodFellas—The director, Martin Scorsese, gives you a lift. He loves the Brooklyn organized-crime milieu, because it's where distortion, hyperbole, and exuberance all commingle. The movie is about being cock of the walk, with banners flying and crowds cheering. Based on Nicholas Pileggi's nonfiction book "Wiseguy," it's a triumphant piece of filmmaking—journalism and sociology presented with the brio of drama. But the three major hoods, played by Ray Liotta, Robert De Niro, and Joe Pesci, don't have a strong enough presence, and the movie lacks the juice and richness that come with major performances. (It's like the Howard Hawks "Scarface" without Scarface.) What you respond to is Scorsese's bravura: the filmmaking process becomes the subject of the movie. Watching it is like getting strung out on pure sensation. Paul Sorvino as Paulie and Lorraine Bracco as Karen both come through, and other performers in minor roles give the movie a frenzied, funny texture. The screenplay is by Pileggi and Scorsese; the cinematography is by Michael Ballhaus; the editing is by Thelma Schoonmaker.—P.K. (9/24/90) (Murray Hill Cinemas, Eastside Cinema, Quad Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Green Card—A limp, dispirited romantic comedy, written and directed by Peter Weir. A rather prissy horticulturist (Andie MacDowell) agrees to an in-name-only marriage to a Frenchman (Gérard Depardieu); he needs a green card to stay in New York, and she needs to show that she's married in order to get past the stuffy co-op board of the building in which she wants to buy an apartment. They meet (for the first time) at City Hall, do the deed, and separate, until several months later, when they're forced to pretend that their union is real—that they aren't strangers but devoted partners who know every little thing about each other. This is a serviceable premise for a screwball comedy, but the screwball is apparently not one of Weir's best pitches: the movie is as flat and lifeless as a hanging curve. Depardieu—as shaggy and hefty as ever—is a skillful comedian, and he looks as if he's having a great time. Not even his vivid presence is enough to rescue this wan little picture. Also with Bebe Neuwirth and Gregg Edelman.—T.R. (Cinema I. . . . ¶ Guild; starting Jan. 11.)

Havana—This Robert Redford vehicle, directed by Sydney Pollack, is a long, lavishly produced, and entirely unconvincing attempt to make a "Casablanca"-style romantic thriller set in the final days of Batista's Cuba. Castro's revolution functions here as what the coming attractions of fifty years ago might have called a "turbulent backdrop" to a love story; the garish, corrupt Havana of the fifties is the sort of setting that's supposed to heighten all the basic human passions—to charge everything with danger and excitement. It doesn't. The screenplay (credited to Judith Rascoe and David Rayfiel) gives Redford and his co-star, Lena Olin, page after page of florid pop-existentialist dialogue, and nothing the characters do makes any sense except in old-movie terms: he's transformed from a cynic into a hero; she runs through the rioting, exultant crowds on the night the city falls to the rebels; they part, ruefully; alone on a beach, he waits for her. That sort of thing. Pollack's direction is, as always, proficient and tasteful; unfortunately, the picture would be more fun—in a campy way—if it were cruder and sloppier. Also with Raul Julia, Alan Arkin, and Tomas Milian.—T.R. (Beekman, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency.)

I Remember Mama (1948)—Kathryn Forbes' novel about her Norwegian family in San Francisco is used as the framework for a mother image of formidable proportions. This image is held to with the serene nostalgia that we reserve for our very best fantasies—Mama (Irene Dunne) is tall and beautiful, wise and omniscient. Except for a few gooey lapses (the worst is a bathetic hospital scene), George Stevens directed with warmth and intelligence; it's not a bad movie, though it has a too careful look, with meticulous reconstructions of San Francisco streets circa 1905-10. Philip Dorn is Papa, and Barbara Bel Geddes does well as daughter Katrin. As the rakehell Uncle Chris, Oscar Homolka goes in for too many flourishes and loiters too long on his deathbed; Edgar Bergen is the timid undertaker who marries Mama's sister. The movie seems hemmed in, maybe because DeWitt Bodeen's script sticks too closely to the stage adaptation by John van Druten. Also with Cedric Hardwicke, Rudy Vallée, Barbara O'Neil, Florence Bates, Peggy McIntyre, June Hedin, and Steve Brown.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Jan. 10-12.)

Akira Kurosawa's 1963 "High and Low" (playing at the Japan Society on January 11 and 14) is a policier that's so exciting and so emotionally committed that it transcends its genre. Kurosawa got the hook for the movie from an Ed McBain novel, "King's Ransom." A principled shoe executive (Toshiro Mifune) is about to use his borrowings and savings to take over the business when he's told that his son has been kidnapped. In an odd twist, the real victim turns out to be his chauffeur's son. Mifune pays the ransom anyway, knowing that competing executives will force him out of the company.

From this melodramatic premise, Kurosawa draws an action-movie triptych with remarkably varied panels. He takes the audience not just from the hilltop where the magnate lives to the shanties below but (as the Japanese title suggests) from Heaven to Hell. The first section is largely confined to Mifune's house—mostly just his living room. But Kurosawa charges every corner of that limited space with tension, as Mifune's associates and the police crowd in on him from different angles, and the kidnapper uses binoculars to spy on him. In the second part, the director slashes through the claustrophobia—with great horizontal strokes—as the police inspector (the dynamic young Tatsuya Nakadai) helps Mifune deliver the ransom on the Bullet Train and then commands his task force on a headlong manhunt. In the third and most impressionistic section, the kidnapper (and Kurosawa) leads the cops (and the audience) on a harrowing tour of sleazy, dope-ridden after-hours Japan.

From the opening arguments over shoes—Mifune wants to make them sturdy, his peers want to make them cheap—the movie has a power that goes beyond its melodrama. Kurosawa took on the McBain novel partly because it gave him an excuse to protest Japanese laws that were easier on kidnappers who (like this villain) extorted ransom from people who weren't directly related to the victims. "High and Low" is imbued with disdain for moral shoddiness. It's one urban suspense film that isn't just a street Western: it takes the spiritual pulse of a society.

The Killers (1946)—Ernest Hemingway's short story about the man who doesn't try to escape his killers is acted out tensely and accurately, and, for once, the gangster-thriller material added to it is not just padding but is shrewdly conceived (by Anthony Veiller and the uncredited John Huston) to show why the man didn't care enough about life to run away. Under the expert direction of Robert Siodmak, Burt Lancaster gives his first screen performance (and is startlingly effective), and Siodmak also does wonders with Ava Gardner. With Charles McGraw and William Conrad in the opening sequence and Edmond O'Brien, Albert Dekker, Sam Levene, Donald MacBride, Vince Barnett, and Jeff Corey. (A 1964 version starring Lee Marvin and directed by Don Siegel was intended to be a TV movie but was considered too brutal and was released in theatres instead; the cast includes Angie Dickinson, John Cassavetes, and Ronald Reagan, at the end of his movie career, as a tough crook.) —P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Jan. 15-16.)

Mr. & Mrs. Bridge—An adaptation, by the Merchant Ivory team (the director James Ivory, the producer Ismail Merchant, and the writer Ruth Prawer Jhabvala), of Evan S. Connell's novels about the painfully respectable Bridge family of Kansas City. Walter and India Bridge (Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward) are pure exemplars of the middle: they're middle-aged and middle-class; they live in a medium-sized city in virtually the dead center of the United States; and they are neither truly happy nor consciously unhappy. They're monsters of moderation. At the beginning of the film, Ivory seems eerily in tune with the novels' distinctive sensibility. The picture gets by, initially, on its strange mood of chilling coziness, and when we tire of that—and we do, because it doesn't change or develop—the actors keep us engaged a while longer. Newman doesn't try to soften the character, or to distance himself from it with exaggerated effects, and his scrupulousness pays off. The character seems not more likable but more human than it does in the novels; by very simple means, Newman enables us to understand Mr. Bridge's insensitivity and emotional ineptitude. And Woodward, too, gives a delicate, subtle performance: she embodies a foolish woman vividly and unpatronizingly. But the screenplay retains the static quality of the books' construction, so at a certain point the scenes begin to feel arbitrary. And Ivory's perspective on the material seems to become clouded by a storm of minutiae—a surfeit of period detail. (The action takes place in the late thirties and early forties.) In the end, the Bridges aren't large enough either to move us or to terrify us; they're the Ambersons without the magnificence. Also with Blythe Danner, Kyra Sedgwick, Robert Sean Leonard, Margaret Welsh, and Simon Callow. —T.R. (12/3/90) (Cinema II.)

The Petrified Forest (1936)—Leslie Howard is all forehead as a world-weary, desiccated intellectual who arrives on foot at a gas station and Bar-B-Q in the Arizona desert; Bette Davis is an ardent, fresh American girl, eager for experience, who lives there with her grandfather (Charley Grapewin). For a guy who's supposed to be burnt out, Howard sure has a lot of talk in him, and it's fancy and poetic as all getout. ("All this evening I've had the feeling of destiny closing in," and so on.) There's no way to say this stuff without sounding affected, and every now and then Howard hits really embarrassing false notes—but who else could embody this Robert E. Sherwood literary conceit and do it as well? Davis, surprisingly, plays her part very simply and doesn't overdo it. In a jumper with a white blouse, wearing bobby socks and a ribbon in her hair, she's very appealing, and she says her lines as if for the first time—she's almost the only one in the cast (except for Grapewin) who does. The movie is famous for Humphrey Bogart's "dangerous" performance as Duke Mantee, the gangster who is using the Bar-B-Q to rendezvous with his moll and the members of his mob, and who, out of mercy, gives the exhausted, idealistic intellectual the peace of death that he seeks. Bogart does look great, but you feel that his performance was worked out for the stage (he had played the part on Broadway). As moviemaking, this is a pedestrian piece of work; the director, Archie Mayo, gives you the feeling that he has even retained the stage blocking. Every move seems rehearsed, and the Sherwood play loses its stage vitality without losing its talkiness. But the actors in minor roles are a considerable asset, and there's a tense exchange between a black mobster and a black chauffeur. Adapted by Charles Kenyon and Delmer Daves.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Jan. 15.)

Postcards from the Edge—This tale of a sorrowful, wisecracking starlet (Meryl Streep) whose brassy, boozing former-star mother (Shirley MacLaine) started her on sleeping pills when she was nine is camp without the zest of camp. It's camp played borderline straight—a druggy-Cinderella movie about an unformed girl who has to go past despair to find herself. The director, Mike Nichols, is a parodist who feigns sincerity, and his tone keeps slipping around. What's clear is that we're meant to be enthralled by the daughter's radiant face, her refinement, her honesty. Nichols keeps the camera on Streep as if to prove that he can make her a popular big star—a new Crawford or Bette Davis. (She remains distant, emotionally atonal.) The tacky, bright-colored film—a near-plotless version of a woman's picture—is weightless, yet it's watchable. Its jadedness appeals to the narcissism of show-biz insiders and to the would-be insider in the rest of us. (Nichols is acclaimed for being hip to the Zeitgeist.) There are a lot of people to look at: Gene Hackman, Dennis Quaid, Richard Dreyfuss, Annette Bening, Robert Bartlett, CCH Pounder, Oliver Platt, Gary Morton, Mary Wickes, Rob Reiner, Simon Callow, Michael Ontkean, Pepe Serna, and Dana Ivey. The screenplay, by Carrie Fisher (with Nichols' uncredited collaboration), is based on her novel; cinematography by Michael Ballhaus. —P.K. (10/22/90) (Worldwide Cinemas.)

Reversal of Fortune—An entertainingly trashy sick-joke docudrama about how Claus von Bülow's conviction for trying to kill his superrich wife was overturned on appeal through the brainpower of the Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz and his team of students and former students. Jeremy Irons' von Bülow is a pop conception of a decadent aristocrat, and the crowd-pleasing satirical subtext is that the heirs and heiresses of the great fortunes are useless, bored, unloving, and unloved. The fun here is that Irons' performance is a masterly conceit. His von Bülow is a depraved cuckoo; he simply can't resist playing ghoulish comedian and making Dershowitz (Ron Silver) his stooge. The script, by Nicholas Kazan, is skillfully constructed, but it's based on Dershowitz's book about the case, and he's the protagonist—the crusading lawyer searching for evidence of innocence. Silver's Dershowitz seems to be overdosing on proud sentimental Jewishness. (That this is a positive stereotype makes it no less a stereotype.) The direction, by Barbet Schroeder, is assured but often impersonal and emptily energetic. With Glenn Close (very effective as Sunny von Bülow, the comatose narrator) and Christine Baranski as Andrea Reynolds.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Quad Cinema, and West Side Cinema.)

The Rose Tattoo (1955)—Tennessee Williams' Serafina (Anna Magnani) is a Sicilian-American widow still in love with the fantasy of her dead husband's perfection, a woman cut off from the life around her because nothing is as good as that dream (and, from the way it looks, the squalid Gulf Coast town around her isn't up to anybody's dream). Magnani's virtuoso display of vitality makes it almost frighteningly clear that her husband's perfection was his sexual potency. The weakness of the material is that the reduction of all human needs to sex is handled only semicomically. Burt Lancaster is rather embarrassing as Serafina's not-too-smart suitor, though he has a funny scene when he chases a goat. Magnani won an Academy Award for her performance; Tennessee Williams reputedly wrote the role for her, though Maureen Stapleton played it on Broadway. Directed by Daniel Mann, the picture comes across as a rather foolish, good-hearted romp. With Jo Van Fleet, Marisa Pavan, Ben Cooper, and Virginia Grey. The cinematographer, James Wong Howe, also won an Academy Award. —P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Jan. 16.)

The Russia House—Fred Schepisi's movie, based on the novel by John le Carré, is an immensely satisfying entertainment. It's an espionage thriller in which things are much, much simpler than they appear to be—a notion that all but subverts the premises of the genre. As is usual in such stories, there are important secrets up for grabs; here they're contained in a manuscript written by a top Soviet defense scientist, Yakov (Klaus Maria Brandauer). The scientist has tried to put this document in the hands of a man he considers a kindred spirit—an alcoholic, saxophone-playing English publisher named Barley Blair (Sean Connery)—but it winds up in the possession of the intelligence professionals of the C.I.A. and MI-6, who then involve Barley in a complicated espionage operation. In this story, the fine-tuned paranoia of the Cold War seems almost comic. The screenplay, by Tom Stoppard, is cleverly constructed, and Schepisi—a virtuoso at making complex action lucid—gives the picture an even, flowing rhythm: he knows that the thriller elements are a farcical counterpoint to the real story, in which all the thrills are emotional ones. The movie diagrams the moves of the professional-spy game while keeping our attention focussed on the amateurs: Barley, Yakov, and Katya (Michelle Pfeiffer), the beautiful woman who acts as a messenger for Yakov and falls in love with Barley. This is a great role for Sean Connery; he gives his richest, most affecting performance. And he and Pfeiffer are superbly matched, because they're both direct, unfussy actors. (There's nothing devious or self-conscious in their relation to the camera or to each other.) The Russian scenery is lovingly photographed by Ian Baker, and the supporting cast provides small delights throughout. (James Fox and Ken Russell are particularly good.) This movie's professionalism is bracing because the enthusiasm and the generous spirit of the amateur are still in evidence. Also with Roy Scheider, John Mahoney, J. T. Walsh, and Michael Kitchen. —T.R. (12/31/90) (Angelika Film Center, Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews New York Twin, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Guild; through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting Jan. 11.)

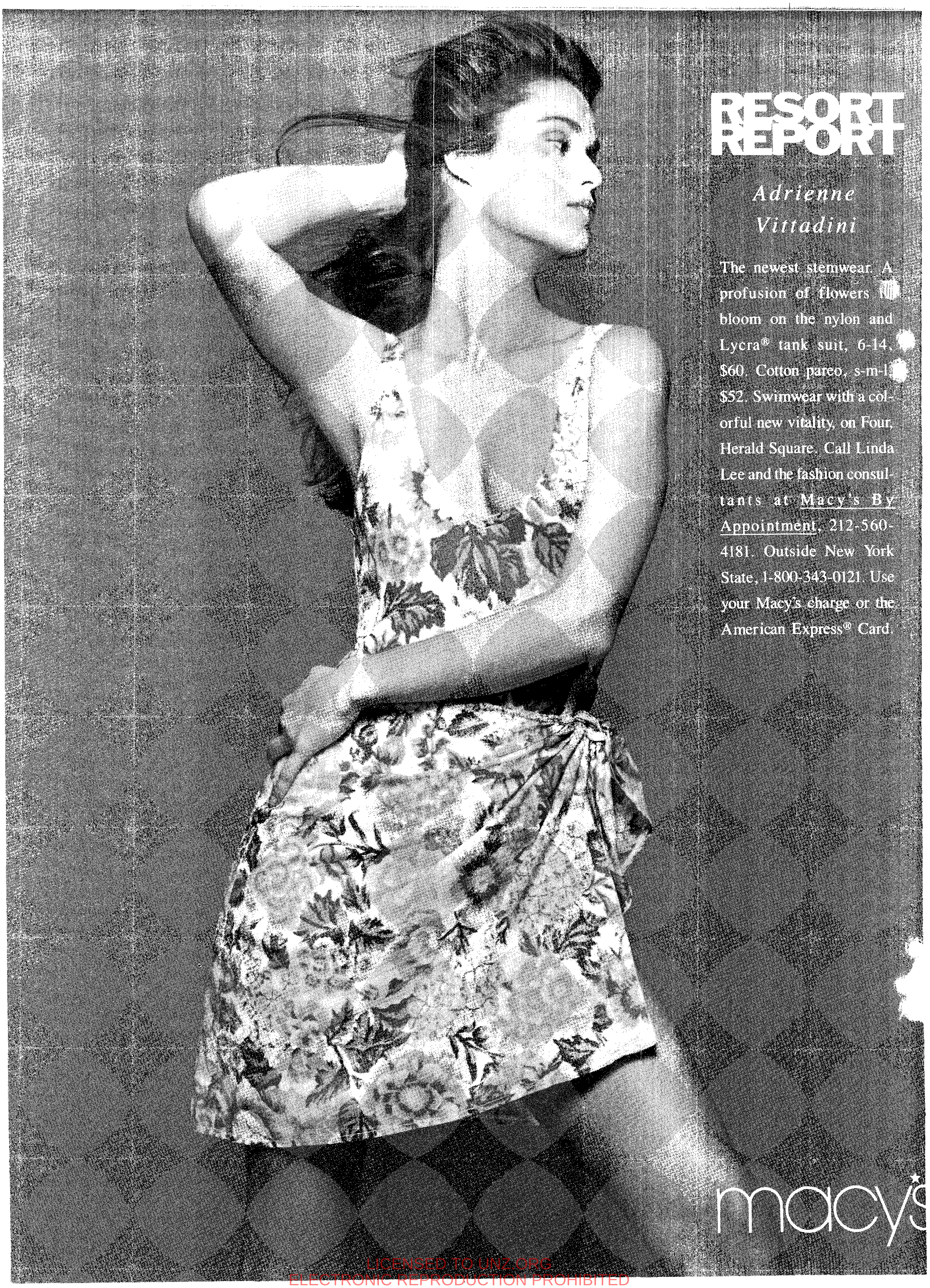
A Jean-Luc Godard festival at Film Forum 2

The Sheltering Sky—Published in 1949, Paul Bowles' semi-autobiographical account of his marriage fascinated readers by its Olympian closeted tone. Under the novel's vaporousness is a pop theme: what happens to a modern, dissatisfied woman—a New York artist-intellectual—if she's in the Sahara, her husband dies, and she's enslaved in a harem? But this is not simply a male writer's version of a woman's harem-whore fantasy: the wife, Kit, seems to be fulfilling the nature and desires that the husband, Port, cannot fulfill for himself. Bernardo Bertolucci's attenuated film version filters out the pop element that gives the book its bit of kicky horror. The movie is about Kit (Debra Winger) giving over to another way of seeing; it's about the shift in her psyche as she becomes a contented love slave and moves away from the verbal, from definitions and categories and neuroses. Bertolucci appears to have lost interest in pace and excitement and verve; he goes deep into monotony. (The whole thing has the impressively decadent look of an Armani ad.) With John Malkovich as Port (who's full of smug self-hatred), Campbell Scott as Tunner, Jill Bennett, Timothy Spall, and Bowles (at seventy-nine) as some sort of presiding expatriate sage.—P.K. (12/17/90) (Murray Hill Cinemas, and 57th St. Playhouse.)

Stardust Memories (1980)—Woody Allen wrote, directed, and stars in this obsessional pastiche, modelled on Fellini's "8½" and shot in black-and-white that suggests a dupe of a dupe of "8½." Allen plays Sandy Bates, a comedian-writer-director who goes to the Hotel Stardust, a resort on the New Jersey seashore, to be the celebrity-in-residence for a weekend film seminar and is besieged by his fans, who want him to make more comedies, though he doesn't feel like it, because all he sees is human suffering. The pushy fans are photographed as Diane Arbus grotesques —big-nosed, fat-lipped, with outsized thick goggles—and Sandy Bates is presented as their victim. To say this picture isn't funny is putting it mildly; it isn't good, either. Everything in it turns uncomfortable, morose, icky. With Charlotte Rampling, Marie-Christine Barrault, Jessica Harper, and, as Sandy's sister, Anne DeSalvo.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Jan. 11-12. . . . ¶ American Museum of the Moving Image; Jan. 12.)

To Sleep with Anger—A domestic comedy with an unusually dense texture. It's shot straightforwardly, in a style that appears realistic almost to the point of banality, and yet right from the start there's something unsettling about its plainness: Charles Burnett, who wrote and directed, keeps hinting that things are not necessarily what they seem. Gideon (Paul Butler) and Suzie (Mary Alice) are a middle-aged black couple who live in Los Angeles; their roots, however, are in the rural South, and they've retained quite a few of the customs, values, and superstitions of the culture they were brought up in. The story gets going when a friend of theirs from back home appears on their doorstep; they invite him to stay with them awhile, and he does. This unexpected guest, Harry (Danny Glover), turns out to be a gifted confidence man, with a sharp eye for human weakness; he's a grinning, honey-tongued demon. He uses his backcountry wisdom with sinister, obscure intent, for purposes that Burnett, cunningly, allows to remain ambiguous. The presence of Harry gives the realistic surface of the movie a vibrant strangeness; he seems to transform everything that happens in these clean, comfortable living rooms and kitchens into dark rituals performed in the woods in the dead of night. The picture has a risky, complex tone: it's a comedy, because the family's threatened world is set right in the end, but there are moments along the way when the intimations of unseen controlling forces—both in Glover's elegantly suggestive performance and in the eerie, calm precision of Burnett's direction—give us the creeps.—T.R. (11/5/90) (Angelika Film Center; through Jan. 10.)

Vincent & Theo—The director, Robert Altman, and the screenwriter, Julian Mitchell, give us an interpretation of the bond that helps to keep Vincent alive while it tears Theo apart. Vincent is obsessive about his painting; Theo is obsessive about Vincent and about his own inability to sell Vincent's work and help him —he can give him only a pittance. This double Passion-play movie is very different from the other Altman movies (even allowing for how different they are from each other). The theme—the bitter entanglement of art and commerce—is Altman's lifelong theme, and, staying with it strictly in terms of the van Gogh brothers, he's able to release his own feelings about how an artist's frustrations lead him to acts of self-destructive fury —cutting off his ear to spite his face. It's a movie about two sensualists made by a sensualist, who understands that their bond of love of art is also a bond of shared rage at the world of commerce. This daring film works on its own relentless, celebratory terms. With Tim Roth, whose acting is a form of kinetic discharge, as Vincent and Paul Rhys as Theo.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Angelika Film Center, and Cinema 3. . . . ¶ Gemini; through Jan. 10.)



RESORT REPORT

Adrienne Vittadini

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

THE world has every reason to want to keep nuclear weapons out of the hands of Saddam Hussein, a man who has used chemical weapons against his own countrymen and who in the last ten years has started two wars, which left hundreds of thousands dead. Even a so-called conventional war in the Gulf would be ferociously destructive; a nuclear war would be sheer catastrophe. Yet at the moment it is not Iraq but the United States that possesses the requisite firepower to breach the nuclear threshold there. According to an analysis by the environmental-activist group Greenpeace, more than five hundred nuclear weapons are now on board American warships in the Middle East. Whether these weapons would be used in the event of war is impossible to know without access to highly classified information. But their presence in the region is disquieting, and underlines a little-recognized fact: preventing the international proliferation of nuclear weapons—a task that Secretary of State James Baker and Eduard Shevardnadze, the recently resigned Soviet Foreign Minister, have termed the No. 1 global-security challenge of the nineteen-nineties—will require the coöperation not only of the nuclear have-not nations but of the superpowers, too.

air
Help yourself

A potentially important step toward this goal will be taken this month at the United Nations, where a conference will consider a worldwide ban on all nuclear-weapons tests. Attending the meeting will be representatives of most of the hundred and seventeen countries that signed the Partial Test-Ban Treaty of 1963, which outlawed nuclear tests everywhere except underground. The new proposal, which is an amendment to that treaty, would ban underground tests as well. If the amendment should be passed and enforced, it would make a comprehensive global nuclear-test ban a reality, and such a ban would halt both the horizontal and the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons; that is, it would prevent non-nuclear nations from acquiring them and would also freeze the arms race between the superpowers. Bernard Lown and Peter Zheutlin, of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, have written, "If testing stopped, so would the development of new, more sophisticated and more destabilizing weapons. That is precisely why the non-nuclear [nations] have seen a nuclear test ban as the quid pro quo for their participation in the non-proliferation regime." That regime was established by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968, which essentially obligated non-nuclear nations not to acquire nuclear weapons so long as the nuclear nations got rid of those they already had. But after twenty-two years of watching the superpowers accumulate ever more imposing arsenals the non-nuclear nations have grown restless. Why, they ask, should they restrain their nuclear appetites when the superpowers continue to violate the promise, made in the treaty, "to achieve at the earliest possible date the cessation of the nuclear arms race and to undertake effective measures in the direction of nuclear disarmament"?

Passage of the comprehensive-test-ban amendment would do much to ameliorate such concerns, and would also encourage progress toward genuine disarmament. Shevardnadze has called such a ban "a matter of utmost urgency": he warned the United Nations last September that "if testing is stopped, we have a chance to survive; otherwise the world will perish." Unfortunately, the Bush Administration has said it would veto the test-ban measure, on the ground that as long as nuclear weapons exist, testing should continue. The United States stands virtually alone on this issue; only Great Britain seems certain to join it in opposition. Actually, resistance to a test ban has been a central feature of American foreign policy for years now. When the Soviet Union initiated a unilateral nuclear-test ban on August 6, 1985, the fortieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, General Secretary Gorbachev invited the United States to join the effort, but the Reagan Administration refused, because a test ban would have precluded development of President Reagan's beloved Strategic Defense Initiative. Gorbachev went on to extend the ban three separate times, without persuading Reagan to follow suit, and, in February of 1987, finally let it expire. After Reagan left office, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze sought to reopen the issue, only to be rebuffed by the Bush Administration's announcement, a year ago, that it had indefinitely suspended its pledge to begin negotiations on limiting nuclear testing.

President Bush has had a difficult time explaining why it may be necessary to go to war with Iraq. Opinion polls have consistently indicated that a majority of Americans oppose going to war and prefer giving economic sanctions ample time to work. A slight plurality of those polled, however, said they would support war if it would prevent Saddam Hussein from obtaining and using nuclear weapons. Vice-President Quayle duly seized upon this rationale while addressing American troops in Saudi Arabia on New Year's Eve, asserting that "unless Saddam Hussein is stopped today, a nuclear-armed Iraq will control most of the world's energy supply tomorrow." Quayle, Bush, and their advisers continue to declare that they would prefer to end the crisis diplomatically, and they are proud of their success in marshalling a global consensus against Saddam Hussein. Indeed, the United Nations resolutions condemning the seizure of Kuwait, imposing mandatory sanctions against Iraq, and authorizing the use of force if Iraq does not withdraw by January 15th passed almost unanimously, and it is precisely this unanimity that gives them their legitimacy and their force. Yet the Bush Administration now stands ready to defy an equally united world community on an equally grave issue. Adding to the irony is the fact that establishing a comprehensive nuclear-test ban could only further the President's stated policy of keeping nuclear weapons away from Saddam Hussein. It would also halt the arms race that, notwithstanding the relaxed public mood and the new friendliness between the superpowers, continues to leave the world poised thirty minutes from doomsday. Things were supposed to be different in the post-Cold War era. The Bush Administration, however, seems determined to prove that, for all the grand talk about a new international order based on consultation and coöperation, in the end the mighty still make their own rules.

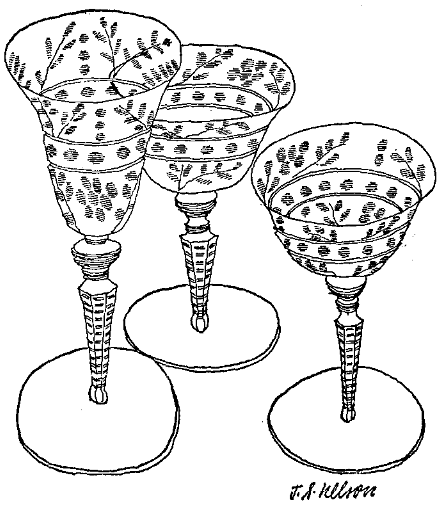
• •

Family Business

A SMALL but worthwhile thing to celebrate these days is that the Argosy bookstore has been on East Fifty-ninth Street for sixty years. The three stately and elegant Cohen sisters, Judith, Naomi, and Adina, who run Argosy, have been offered lots of money to sell its building—a six-story nineteenth-century structure with a funny indented arcade, which their father bought in the nineteen-fifties after he had been running a secondhand bookstore on the lower floors—but they have always refused.

Judith (the eldest): "All around us, tall, alarming buildings were going up, and it was driving them crazy that we wouldn't sell. There used to be one secondhand bookstore after another on this street when we were growing up—the Carnegie Bookshop and the Quality Bookshop and Carol Cox—and now they're all gone except us. 'You're ruining the *parcel*,' the developers would whine, as though we ought to feel guilty about it. The developers keep coming back to us with new proposals, like suitors. But the point is that we don't really run a secondhand bookstore. It's more—more something else. I'm not entirely sure what. A kind of library, maybe, with the books for sale."

Searching for a metaphor to describe their store, all three sisters will sometimes repeat, a little ruefully, their father's ancient *bon mot* that what makes Argosy unique is that it is a kind of literary slaughterhouse. "What he meant, of course, is that every item in a library that arrives here gets put up for sale—gets *used*," Judith says. "The way that in a slaughterhouse they use every part of the pig, one way or another. When we buy a library, we spend whatever spare time we have sorting it out. The really rare books go to Adina, who either puts them in the gallery on the main floor or locks them away upstairs. The modern firsts, and there are always some, even if people don't know it, are what I look after—everything from Arnold Bennett to Updike—and so they go upstairs with me to the fifth floor. If there are letters with autographs of famous people, and there's rarely a library without one or two of those, Naomi takes them for the autograph room, up on six. The prints come out, and our mother puts them in folders, and looks after them on two. She started out running an art gallery that my father bought, and now she's one of the finest print curators in New York. Dad still just kind of oversees the whole place. The out-of-print but not particularly valuable modern books go into the basement or, if they're fairly popular, onto the main floor. Books—paperbacks and things—that we can sell for a dollar go into the arcade on the street. Then, there are almost always some nineteenth-century books that don't have much value as books—sermons and forgotten novels—but have beautiful bindings and paper. So we put them wherever they fit, and we sell them by the yard or by the book to interior designers and set decorators. They'll call and say, 'I need three shelves' worth of red calf leather for the library in an apartment.' Some library."



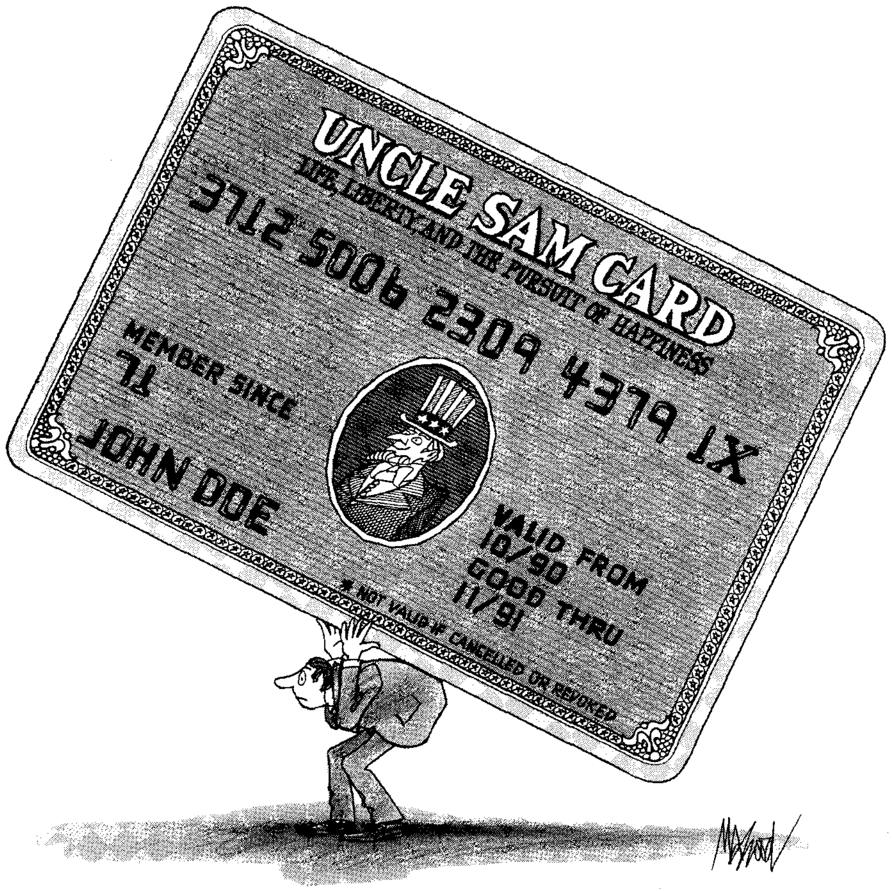
Adina (the youngest): "I don't think Argosy is like a *slaughterhouse*, exactly. More like a place where it's always Christmas, with presents to open."

Louis Cohen, the father of the Cohen sisters, opened a bookstore down on Fourth Avenue in 1927. He decided to call it Argosy, because he thought that books were a kind of treasure, and also because, in the age of the telephone book, he thought that it would be a good idea to have a business whose name began with "A." He moved the business to Fifty-ninth Street in 1931, and began to get walk-by customers on their way from Bloomingdale's.

What the sisters like best about their place is the system of cataloguing they have invented and the wonderful way the upstairs floors smell. "Isn't the smell of old books wonderful?" Adina says. "People say it's musty, but that's not it at all. It's a smell made up of glue and old paper, of course, but also a sense of interiors, of life going on inside things, between covers. It's a smell *you* can just drink in." The classification system that the sisters have evolved over the years has had to be nimble-footed and not easily flustered, since it has to cover everything, including old books about New Jersey ("Weather Record for New Brunswick, New Jersey 1847-1890," "History of Perth Amboy, New Jersey," "A New Jersey Recipe Book") and secondhand Tom Clancys, and, unlike a library system, it has to be prepared to surrender its inventory in an instant. The system has its oddities and dignified little stubbornnesses; all books about sex, for instance, are still classified as "Curiosa."

Judith: "It's a different bookstore to different people—that's the way things are with books. There are lots of people who genuinely think that the whole bookstore is the arcade outside and the main floor. And there are collectors who think that the downstairs is just a kind of zoo that we keep because of nostalgia, and who immediately come upstairs to look at the modern firsts. And there are the print collectors, who come to the second floor. And the autograph hounds, who see Naomi upstairs, and who have absolutely no interest in any writing that isn't by somebody famous. It wouldn't be possible to reproduce this kind of variety anyplace else. I mean, we've had some offers, but it would mean giving up something you own, something family, for something you would rent. People have made offers for the building, and promised us a long-term lease on an equivalent space—"

Adina: "But there's always some ridiculous stipulation, like ninety-nine years."



Exhibition

TOMISLAV GOTOVAC is a fifty-three-year-old Yugoslav artist whose work often requires him to get naked. He doesn't particularly enjoy it—"I'm just as shy as anyone else," he told us the other day—but he has found nudity to be an essential element of many of his performances, which have established his reputation among the art lovers, bohemians, law-enforcement officials, consulting psychiatrists, party bureaucrats, and general populace of his native Zagreb. The success of his performances—their trenchant wit and subversive spirit—attracted the attention of Milena Kalinovska, a guest curator who put together an exhibition of politically charged conceptual art, "Rhetorical Image," that is currently on display at the New Museum, in SoHo. A series of photographs in the exhibition show Mr. Gotovac stark naked, parading in broad daylight, trancelike, his arms outstretched, through Zagreb's quaint cobblestone streets and squares.

When we met Mr. Gotovac, he was busy attaching those images and dozens of other pictures, along with certificates and clippings and official papers, to the museum's walls in preparation for the opening—his contribution is actually a vast collage entitled "Dokumenta (←1956-1990→)"—but he seemed happy to take a few moments off to talk with us. Indeed, Mr. Gotovac seemed happy about practically everything. This was his first time in New York City, he told us, and the town was giving him a wonderful buzz. "New York's one great big pulsating work of art," he said when we asked him whether he'd had a chance to visit any of the other museums. "Who needs museums? Who needs galleries? Everything—the way time moves here, the speed, Central Park, the way light falls on the avenues, the black and white people hurrying down the street—it's like I've walked into a movie."

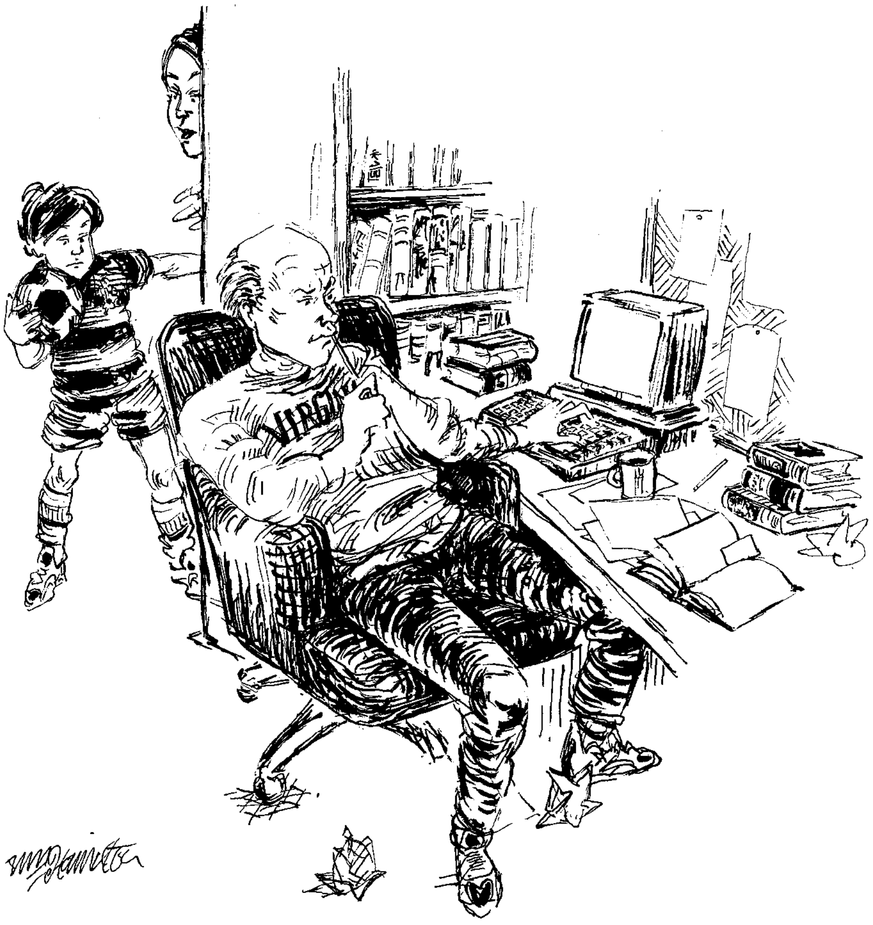
In addition to doing performance pieces, Mr. Gotovac occasionally makes highly rarefied avant-garde films; references to far more conventional movies are scattered through all his work, however. For example, the title of one of his pieces pictured at the museum is "lying naked on pavement, kissing the asphalt (zagreb, i love you!)," but its subtitle is "homage to howard hawks' hatari! (1962)." Mr. Gotovac's explanation was "Parading around naked like that, with all the people gawking and the police finally running up to ensnare me, I felt a lot like the rhino in that movie."

Much of Gotovac's work comes out of the Dadaist ethos of the sixties. "Happenings were especially popular in Eastern Europe, because it was precisely state policy in our countries that *nothing* ever be allowed to happen," he said. "Those occasions were ways of getting things going." One naked walkabout recorded in the photographs at the New Museum landed him in a police station, and eventually provoked a trial: he was sentenced to ten days in jail or a fine. Gotovac appealed the sentence, on the ground that he was an artist and such performances constituted his métier. That's all very well, the appellate judges ruled, in effect, but we're artists, too, and handing out fines is *our* métier.

The naked walks are actually quite powerful performances beyond their immediate silly-scandalous aspect. To confront a state built on mass conformity with an assertion of absolute, pristine individuality is, of course, a political gesture, and this one is rendered all the more compelling by the way it offers the individual up to the state in a *spirit of raw vulnerability.* Performing such a ritual in the middle of Europe, where two generations ago people were being marched naked through town squares on their way to death camps, affords the piece a profound historical dimension. And in contemporary Yugoslavia, where bitter regional and ethnic tensions are proliferating by the week, such a performance has an eerily prophetic aura as well.

Gotovac's entire "Dokumenta" piece, it turns out, is similarly charged. "In the capital of every republic of the Yugoslav federation, there's a Museum of the Revolution, through which schoolchildren, for example, are ritually marched," he told us. "The museums feature yellowing photos of photos, bad copies of copies of documents, the birth certificates and gradebooks and passports and other official papers of eventual heroes, and documents showing how they were arrested or tortured or martyred, and clippings from newspapers where they are mentioned in passing, and so forth—everything lined up on the walls in a dreadfully boring jumble. In 1986, I simply decided to create a museum of my own revolution, with bad copies of my own documents similarly arrayed." Typically, "Dokumenta" thus reads as a clever, almost sarcastic provocation—a parody of all those dreadful museums of martyrology—but is also in dead earnest: what could be more subversive in a Communist mass culture like Yugoslavia's than to insist that an ordinary individual's life might be worthy of an entire display?

Mr. Gotovac had to get back to work. We thanked him for taking the time to talk with us, and asked if he had thought about performing a naked walk anywhere in Manhattan. He laughed, said no, and added that it probably wouldn't work here. "In Zagreb, when I tell them I'm walking around naked because I'm an artist, they think I'm crazy and seriously consider having me committed," he said. "Here, I'm afraid, if I were to go completely crazy and start walking around naked they'd probably just say, 'Oh, must be some kind of artist.' "

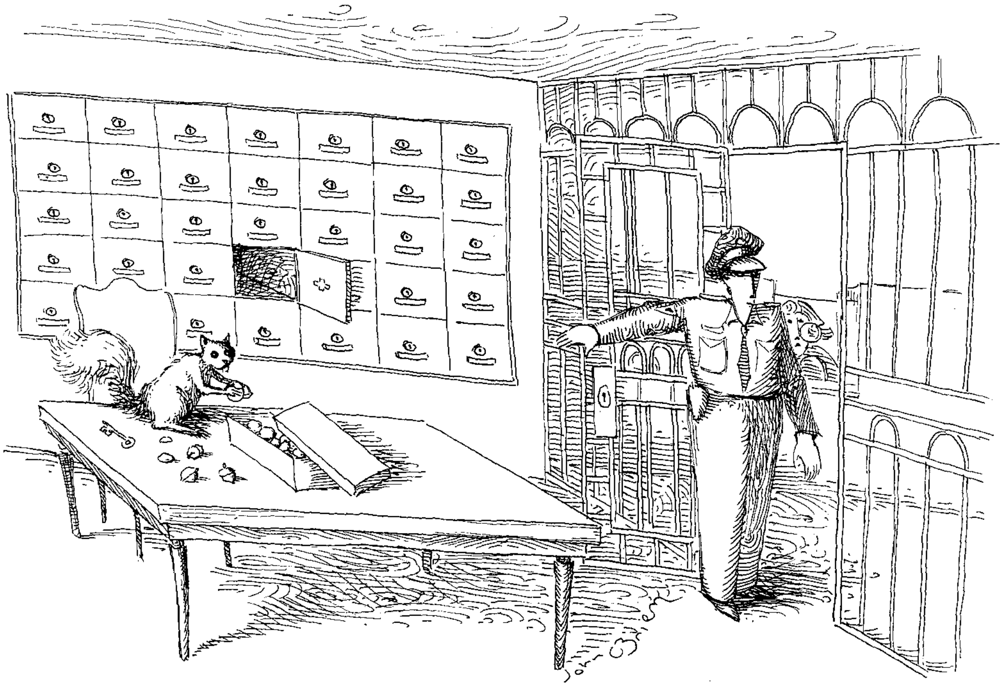


"I know, but all promises are off when Daddy's writing his grant proposals."

Lego

GROWING up in Queens in the sixties and seventies, Francie Berger knew exactly what she wanted from life: more Lego building bricks. She received her first set, a gift from her parents, when she was three. Gradually, she added to her holdings. She liked to build houses, and she wished that she could build bigger ones. As a teen-ager, she began writing to Lego Systems, Inc., the American division of the toy's Danish manufacturer, to ask if she could order, say, two million standard red bricks. The company said that she could not. In college—where she majored in architecture, figuring that building real houses was the adult occupation that came closest to her favorite activity—she wrote more letters. At some point, it occurred to her that she might be able to get a job at Lego itself. She began calling the company on a monthly basis, and she once dropped by its headquarters, in Enfield, Connecticut. "By then," Berger recalls, "they knew who I was." The person who was dispatched to get rid of her told her to send a résumé, by mail, after graduation. Undeterred, she spent part of her senior year using Lego bricks to build a scale model of a farm. The model served both as her senior thesis and as a job application. Seeing no way out, Lego hired her, in 1984, for a three-week trial period. She has been with the company ever since, and is perhaps the most satisfied worker in the history of employment.

Berger's job is building things out of Lego bricks. Her works include the six-foot-tall red-bearded pirate that stands in the Lego department of F. A. O. Schwarz, on Fifth Avenue, and the six-foot-tall roller coaster, part of an ani-



mal amusement park, in the window of the Toys "R" Us in Herald Square. They also include the thirteen-foot-tall (and twenty-seven-and-a-half-foot-wide) replica of the United States Capitol which, along with a number of models of other national landmarks and monuments, recently spent a little more than a month on display at A. & S. Plaza, on West Thirty-third Street. All these models are made entirely of Lego bricks (the Capitol contains more than half a million), and all were assembled by Lego's staff of model-designers and model-builders, of which Berger is the head. The company uses the models as promotions. The Capitol was part of a travelling show that visited ten shopping malls during 1990 and is now in the process of being split up and parcelled out to various children's museums. Most people, upon seeing the Capitol model, have two reactions. The first is "Hey, the White House!" The second is "I can't believe somebody built that out of Lego bricks!"

"When we build a model, we don't use any bricks that you can't buy in stores, and we don't alter them or cut them or do anything weird to them," Berger told us not long ago, when we went to visit her in Enfield. "First, the designers draw the model on special graph paper that is scaled to the bricks. Then they build a prototype without gluing it, to prove that it can be done. Then the model-builders make an exact copy and glue it together. They also make sure it's as hollow as possible, so it will be easier to move around." Some of the moving around is done in two custom-built air-ride semitrailers.

Lego's model-builders work at long tables that can be raised and lowered hydraulically. The tables are connected to an elaborate ventilation system that whisks away fumes from the glue, which is kept in Elmer's bottles but is actually methyl ethyl ketone, a potent solvent that causes the plastic of the bricks to fuse. Once a model has been glued, it can be taken out into the parking lot of a shopping mall, say, and washed down with a garden hose or scrubbed with Formula 409. It can also be left outside for just about as long as you like. The visitors' parking lot at the company headquarters is furnished with an earlier version of the Capitol model, which is kept there year-round.

Francie Berger is thirty years old. She wears aviator glasses and, occasionally, white go-go boots. Her hair is brown and is cut in a long shag. In her office she has a desk, a telephone, a lamp, a photograph of herself chatting with the architect Philip Johnson, some other things, and dozens of bins containing Lego bricks, all sorted by color and type. The Lego building system consists at the moment of roughly thirteen hundred different elements, and Berger is allowed to have as many of any of them as she wants. If she uses up all the pieces in one of her bins, she simply walks into another part of the building and gets more.

Berger's life thus far has been fashioned almost entirely of Lego bricks. When she was married, in 1988, her wedding invitation was decorated with a photograph of a three-foot-tall red Lego hippopotamus bride and groom. Building the hippopotamuses took Berger and her fiancé, a welder, more than two months. On top of the couple's wedding cake was a smaller Lego model, of a human bride and groom. When other Lego employees get married, they often borrow this decoration for their cakes. Each December, Berger and her husband use Lego bricks to build a seasonal tableau beneath their Christmas tree.

Berger does most of her work in her office, but sometimes she travels to shopping malls or state fairs and builds models while people watch. She and a colleague recently built a copy of the Connecticut Capitol at a fair not far from the company's headquarters. The model was eight and a half feet high, ten feet wide, and six feet deep. Building it consumed a hundred and ninety-two person-hours of labor over twelve days. While Berger and her colleague worked, people gathered around to watch and ask questions. Many of the people wanted to know what they would have to do to get a job at Lego. Every year, Berger receives dozens of letters from children, art students, engineers, architects, and others, all wanting to know the same thing. "A lot of kids ask what kind of college courses they should take," Berger told us. "When I write back, I just kind of explain how I got my job. It was a little unorthodox, but it worked for me."

Berger's job didn't exist when she was hired. At that time, all the models used by Lego's American division were made in Denmark and shipped to the United States. To Berger, that seemed nutty. Why not build those models right here in America, and why not let Francie Berger build them? Today, she supervises two other designers and half a dozen full-time model-builders. All these people are, in effect, manifestations of her determination to spend her life doing the thing she likes best.

JUN-HEE

WE said the word "abortion" the day the test came back, when we were still in shock, but it was only a formality—an option too familiar for silence but easily crossed off in our excitement. "Jun-Hee, you're pregnant," Tanner whispered. He kept smiling. I questioned our decision, of course—I would feel worse now if I hadn't—especially in the mornings and early evenings during those two weeks when I was miserable and sick on the bathroom tile. I wondered if we had thought things out enough. I wondered what would happen to the comfortable isolation that Tanner and I had built—it would be unfair to keep our child to ourselves like that. I felt the weight through my abdomen and into my thighs, the weight of fear and instinct. I had questions, but each day they moved closer to being the questions of *how to do this right* and further from the question of whether we should do it at all.

Still, when the child was gone, she left the guilt behind.

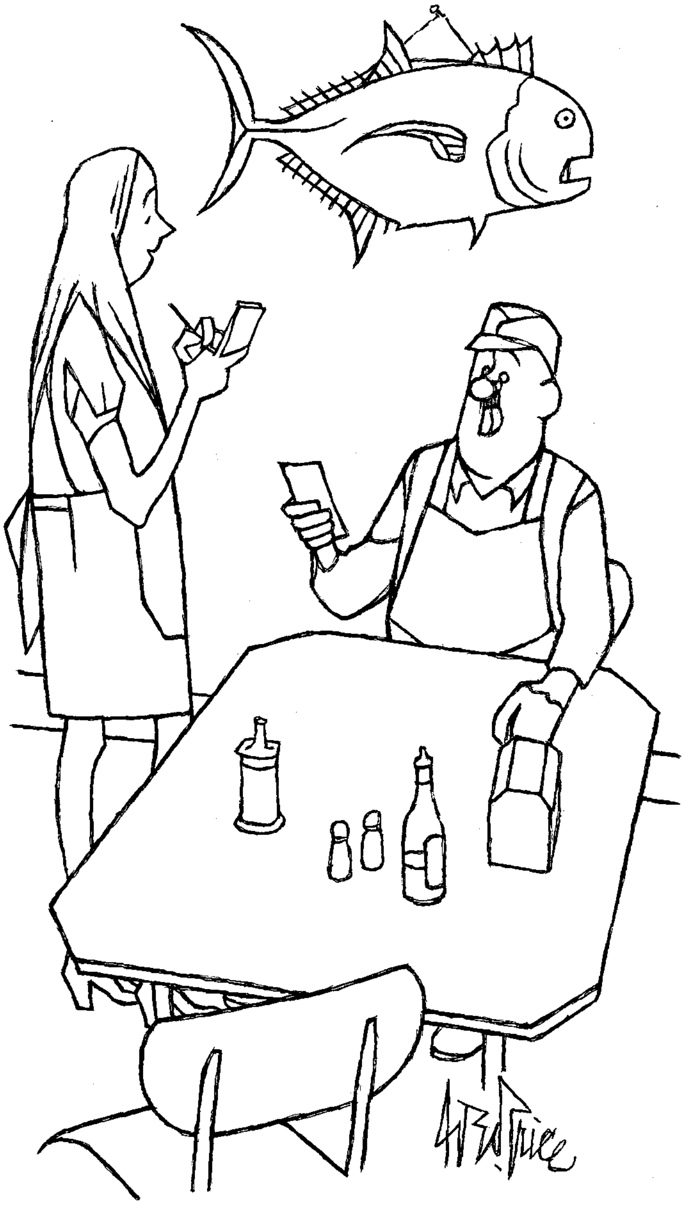
My mother came like a thief in the night and took the child from me. I saw her in a dream. There were Tanner and I, up above everything, and the tidy oval of cotton blanket in my arms, the warmth against my chest. Be careful, Tanner said, and we were. There was the sense of accomplishment and wonder, hung across our shoulders like a shawl. And then my mother was below us. Yoo-hoo, she called. Her bright tone frightened me because she was a serious and dour person. I leaned out the window, and she stood on the sidewalk in the burgundy dress that she had worn the last time I saw her. Come down, baby, she called with a smile. She spoke in Korean. She waved to me, or to the child. The child was there in front of me. There was the small sound of wind in my ears, then my mother: Fall down, baby. Come, come. The child was there in front of me and, though I did not give her up, I did not reach to save her. She fell into my mother's arms; there was only the small wind. That's better, my mother whispered, bent over the child. My mother looked up at me—her face was red and *swollen with tears.*

I let the doctor provide her own explanation; I didn't tell her about my mother. This kind of thing happened, she told us; there was nothing anyone could have done. She said it was an "isolated tragedy"; there was no reason to think that we couldn't try again and have a perfectly healthy baby. The doctor was sorry. "I'm so sorry," she said.

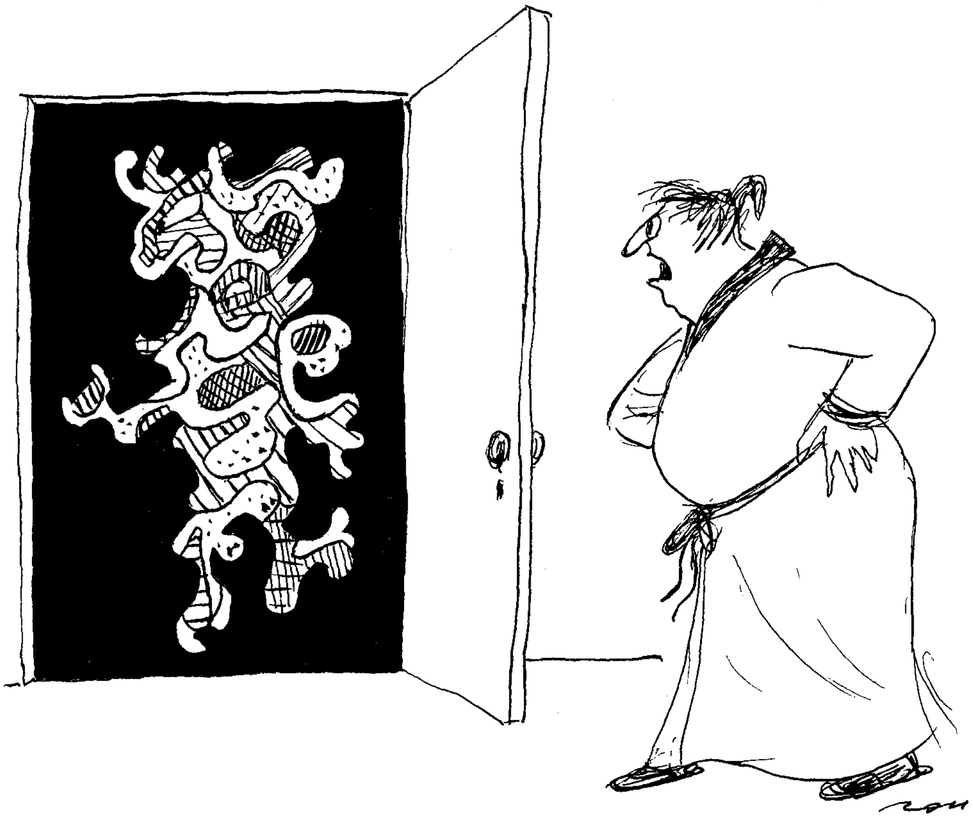
I understood that the dream was something that belonged to both of us, but I didn't tell Tanner. I knew he wouldn't have accepted it. He would have resorted to medical explanations that he knew nothing about, pretending they required less of his faith. I was afraid he would want to talk me out of the dream, as if doing me a favor. I should have told him, but I didn't.

Tanner's instinct was to reason, to use hindsight to reconstruct the past. For him the past was something that led logically and fluidly into the future, like a river. He decided that what had happened was for the best: we had never wanted a child to begin with and had been too caught up in the excitement and the surprise. He compared it to a couple who fall in love at first sight and decide to marry the same day—they're unprepared for the disappointments and boredom of a lifetime; they just want that first day to go on and on.

In the evenings I was haunted by my dream. Tanner and I would lie together, pretending to sleep. I wondered how the child had left my arms; I wondered what Tanner had known when he warned me to be careful. I didn't like my mother's saying "That's better." I didn't like her tears, as if she had done something she hated but was obliged to do. Most of all, I was troubled by the instant in which I could have reached out and taken the baby back. I couldn't see her small face, but I imagined that if I had seen it, her look would have been of surprise and disappointment. I wondered if this was a test that Tanner and I had failed. I wondered if every woman was tested by her own mother before being allowed her pregnancy, and if most of



"I'll have the fish chowder, hold the flotsam and jetsam."



"How dare you come home in this condition!"

• •

them remembered passing or only felt it as a tightness in their consciences. We never wished the child any harm, I told myself.

TANNER was in a minor accident on his way to work. He made a wide turn pulling into the driveway at his machine shop, and a woman tried to pass him on the right, slamming into his front end. That night he dramatized her crazy defensiveness for me, her flying out of her car. "I thought you were turning left—I was looking, you started left!"

"I had my signal on," he had told her.

"You didn't have your signal on—I looked. I thought you were turning left. I was looking."

It turned out that the insurance company she told him to call had dropped her four months before, and she actually had no insurance. She was recently divorced, and working for the first time in her life at the age of forty-seven—for five-fifty an hour. The bottom line was that we would either break this woman's back or pay for the damage ourselves. I didn't know whether to be mad at the woman for allowing herself to be so dependent on her former husband or sorry for her as a victim of her dependence. What surprised me, though, was the way it weighed on Tanner. At dinner he furrowed his brow and winced, as if carrying on his own debate. I bit my wineglass to keep from laughing, and finally I asked, "What is it, Tanner?"

He looked surprised to find me still at the table. "Think about it," he said.

He was so serious I couldn't help laughing. "Think about what? Think about a woman screwed by her husband and by a culture that says it's ladylike to be dependent? Come on, Tanner, that's old news."

"That's not what I mean." He shook his head.

I thought maybe my tone had been a little cruel. "I'm sorry," I told him.

He stared vacantly at the table and shook his head. He said, "I was driving down a road I drive every day, a road I've driven for four years, turning in to a driveway I've turned in to a thousand times. Maybe I was worried about the furnace for Honeywell, I don't know. I started my turn without thinking."

He sat back and shrugged his shoulders. "I probably *did* make a wide turn, I probably do every time." Tanner wore the concerned look that I had seen before. It meant only that the logic and order of his world were temporarily being put into question: could it really be that there were unexplainable events? Heavens! I wanted to kiss him.

"Then she slams into me," he continued, gesturing, "and suddenly I'm in the world of things beyond myself. There are traffic noises, and there's a desperate woman begging me to say it wasn't her fault, and it's raining, even."

Tanner shook his head and smiled and I went to him. I knelt on the floor and laid my head and my arms in his lap. He ran his fingers across my back.

"Lots of things have nothing to do with us," he said. I laughed then, and soon he did, too. "You know what I mean." He smiled and shook his head, yet again.

"You're going to wear out your neck," I told him.

I CALLED my father in Seoul, catching him in the morning before he went to work. I had only talked to him twice in the fifteen months since my mother's death, so I asked if he was lonely. First he said, "You should hear yourself, Jun-Hee, you speak your Korean like a foreigner." Then he answered my question. "No, your mother and I talk more now than we did when we were together. She's become more thoughtful in death; she has more to say."

"Where do you speak?" I asked. I heard the front door open and Tanner came in. He was home early from work; he carried a bag of groceries in one arm. I waved to him and tried to look happily surprised.

"What do you mean?" my father said. "We talk wherever she wants to. Sometimes she asks me questions at work, in front of a manager or a clerk. Questions she knows will make me angry and want to answer her there."

Tanner began to unload groceries into the refrigerator and the cabinets. I took the phone out to the porch. "Can't you just *think* back an answer? You don't really have to talk, do you?"

"No, Jun-Hee. I talk. She talks to me; I talk back. It's a conversation."

"Forgive me; I'm not up on all of

THIS PEN CLINGING TO MY HAND

This pen clinging to my hand
is frightened—in small doses
even a stone emits an invisible ray,
slowly devours its predators.
Who would suspect something so old
still wants to survive?

There's hope for us all! You, too,
can tread in water no one ever sees—
you don't drown
but there's no shore, either,
just the drowning forever
with others, a word among words,
and the fingers that want to splash about
whose only mist is enough
to start a sky from the beginning
enough to hide the sea

There never was hope. Words
lose their breath, have second thoughts
though you can still make out
when shadows and days pass by—
you almost remember your soft pineal eye
closing over without a sound.
Your other eyes won't heal
and tears still warn you away

Your hand, too, will ache
cautiously holding this page
and the paper spread through your body
through the withered shallows
just learning to weep

You try to save yourself
writing at night, all night
words gouged out from stone, *Esther Esther*—
you don't drown
but they soon start to whisper
and your arms once so generous

—Simon Perchik

• •

this." There was a short silence between us.

"She said she's seen you," my father continued.

I felt my stomach turn. "Really?" I asked. "What else did she say about me?"

"She said she took your baby."

I swallowed hard and sat down. "That's true." I kept my back to the kitchen and there was no sound—I guessed that Tanner might have gone to the bedroom to change. "It was a terrible thing for her to do." I knew that he would disagree, that my father believed our future lay in the hands of the dead. Like fate, they could do no wrong or right. There was a low rattle across the phone line. He didn't have to answer me, but in his long silence there seemed an intentional cruelty. "Did she tell you why?" I asked, and I was surprised to find myself crying.

"No." His voice was sad, yet resigned. My father carried a self-control that exerted its presence on anyone near him. With a conscious depth in his voice, he said, "I know why, though. She told me something before she died." He waited. Finally, he said, "She told me she forgives you. She said, 'I have forgiven our Jun-Hee and you will, too. But her children never will. They'll never have America and they'll never have Korea. The voices of their ancestors will be too tangled to hear.' "

I wiped a hand across my face and felt angry at my own ridiculous tears. I was careful to keep them from my voice. "She had no right to say that. You both knew that Tanner and I had no plans for children." I whispered now, I don't know why. "She had no right to take our child, to decide for us."

"Don't argue with me, I'm telling you what she said. Besides, Jun-Hee, children or not, the fact is you've brought the end of our family. It's not your mother's fault."

My head was swimming and I felt suddenly foolish for calling him. Could I have expected anything better than this? I disconnected the line. I sat still a moment and wiped my eyes again. Then I went to the kitchen and hung up the phone. Tanner was out of sight. On the porch I sat in a frayed lawn chair. I wondered if my father was pleased by the phone call, or if he could still feel bad for me. I began to cry again—it felt natural, and I decided not to be embarrassed. I knew the next time I talked to him, in a month or a year, there would be no reference to any of this. We would act as if it hadn't happened and resume our careful roles. And wasn't that the way I wanted it? Wasn't the distance what I had wanted since leaving Korea?

Tanner came out onto the porch; he had changed into shorts and a T-shirt. His right hand was taped up and his pinkie was stiff with a splint. He sat down in the chair across from me, and I sniffled and leaned forward.

"I got in another accident," he said, smiling and holding the hand out. "Broke the finger in two places. I may have totalled the rental car."

He laughed and I did, too. I wiped my eyes. "What happened?" I asked.

"I missed a possum and hit a tree in the process. My pinkie turned backward when my hand hit the dash."

"Tanner." I sat beside him and he laughed again. "What should we do with you?"

He said, "I blacked out for a minute, too. They took me to the hospital, but the doctor decided my head was all right."

"You should have called me."

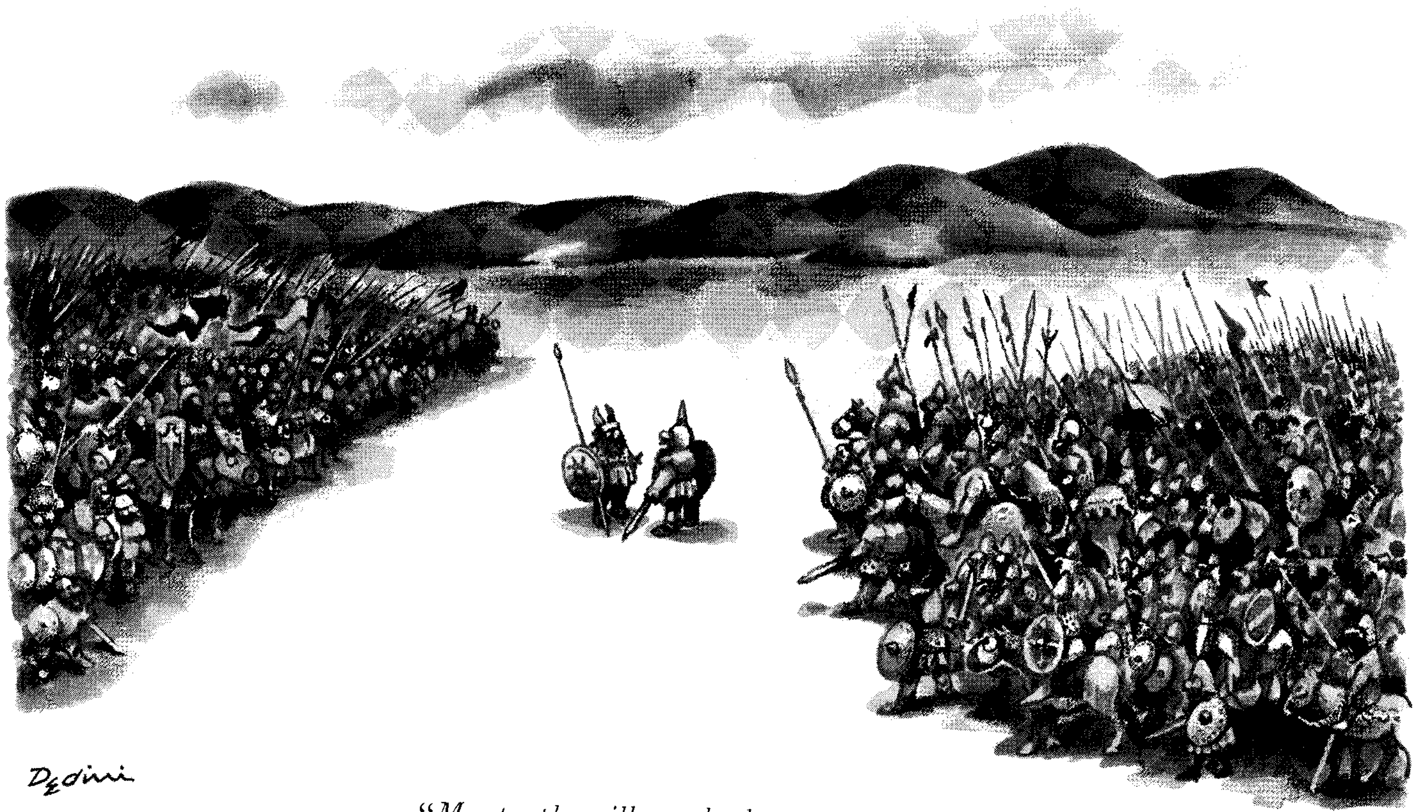
"The doctor laughed when I told him the whole story."

I smiled and shook my head. "And then you went and got groceries?"

"I called Frank at the shop, and he drove me home. I'm starving."

I WENT to a Catholic church where I knew two Korean families worshipped. I didn't expect to see either of them; it was just the only church in the area that I knew anything about. I picked a Thursday morning—for some reason I didn't want Tanner to know—and I called the lab to tell Alex I'd be late to work.

My mother never left the *Buddhasasana*, though she had to face cruel jokes from my father whenever she voiced her beliefs. He'd had a Protestant "uncle" from Britain when he was young—actually just a close friend of his father's. There was always his proud insistence that he was a Protestant, his telling me, often while angry or drinking, the story of Christ. Later, when I took a class in college here, I realized how little he really understood Christianity and how his



"My people will get back to your people."

Mahayana Buddhist upbringing had not left him.

I knew the connection to my mother was thin in this church. But I went for my own sake—maybe I would feel closer to her.

It was a new, squat building with white aluminum siding and very few windows—industrial-strength religion, I suppose. The only sign of holiness was a small golden cross, perched at the crown of the roof like a weathervane. I arrived at twenty after eight and the next mass was scheduled for nine, which didn't bother me at all. I didn't feel up to the crowd or the structure of a mass—it was the first time I had been in a church in six years, and the last time had been for our wedding.

I found a pew far enough from the altar not to feel intimidated but close enough to help me work up something like a prayer. I folded my hands in my lap. There was a ceramic figure of the Virgin Mary hanging by the altar, and I found her eyes meeting my own.

When I thought of the baby I pictured the bundle of blanket from the dream. But I knew my child had been little more than a fertilized egg and a lot of blood. There were the films I had seen in college charting the development of the fetus—the tight curl of the back, the odd, oversized head, the arms and hands and dark-red fingers. I stared at Mary, at the wrinkled blue of her ceramic gown, at her wide shoulders and small breasts. Finally I asked to speak to my mother. Despite what my father had said, I only spoke in thoughts.

I closed my eyes and that helped me to concentrate, to see her in my memory. "I want to talk to you. What you did to Tanner and me was wrong. I want to know why you did it. I deserve an explanation."

I pictured my mother in her burgundy, Western-style dress, the one she had worn in the dream. I pictured her hearing me and considering an answer. I imagined the weight of wisdom and perspective in her features—the confidence of the dead, the thoughtfulness that my father had mentioned. I wondered what she had done with my daughter, and I wanted to see the child, too, but my imagination had limits.

I waited. When I opened my eyes, the church held a yellow glow from the candlelight and the morning sun through the high windows. There was a clean smell, like varnish.

"I don't understand," I whispered. There was no one close enough to overhear. I rested my chin on my folded hands, on the back of the pew before me. "I don't know, I don't know if this church helps anything or not, for you. I'm very serious, though. I don't think I'm asking too much."

I waited. I thought of my mother in Korea, of the continual shuffle of her slippers and the hollow quiet in her eyes. I imagined her caring for my child in death, a grandmother, and I began to feel the heaviness of self-pity in my stomach. "You owe me this," I whispered, trying not to be bitter or pitiful. I stood to go. At the last minute I decided to cross myself.

AT work, Tanner left the power on while he was wiring a control box and gave himself a shock that could have been fatal. When he called me at the lab I could hear a smile in his voice, but he was no longer up to a laugh. "What do you think it is?" I asked. "Can this really be just coincidence?"

"I don't know."

I waited. "Tanner, maybe you should talk to someone who knows something about this."

"Yeah," he said, as if he had already

considered this. "Join the analyst generation, huh?"

"No. Just get some help, before you kill yourself."

"I'm not going to kill myself. I just — I don't know. I think it's that my mind's been elsewhere a lot. Both accidents happened while I was doing something routine—I wasn't even thinking. The possum accident I had no control over. Sometimes I wonder if I'm subconsciously punishing myself."

"For what? That's ridiculous."

"Maybe," he laughed, though it was not a pleasant laugh, "but so is wrecking two cars and electrocuting yourself in one week. It's pathetic, Jun-Hee. I haven't felt this clumsy since puberty. I'm like some teenager."

Alex walked by my cubicle and gave the microscope a heavy glance, as if I were invisible unless bent over the eyepiece. He went on into his office without a word. "Well," I said to Tanner, "I just don't buy the do-it-yourself Freud." I waited for a response, but all he said was "Uh-huh."

"Listen," I said. "I have to go. Alex is on the prowl. I'm coming home soon, though, and we'll heat up some leftovers. I'll bring us a bottle of wine. You *are* old enough to drink, aren't you, my late bloomer?"

LATE in the evening, we lay together on the sofa with the lights out and I kissed his smooth chest, both of his tiny pink nipples. We hadn't spoken for some time. When Tanner began, his tone was distant, as if from somewhere in his memory.

"The night before we lost the baby," he said, "I lay beside you in bed and I couldn't sleep. You had been out cold for a while. At some point, I decided to turn the spare room into a nursery, all in my mind."

He paused. I put my ear to his chest and heard the even thump of his heart. He said, "I took down the ridiculous wallpaper first thing. I painted the walls a light blue, with white clouds spread across the ceiling. I went slowly, taking the time to imagine everything until I could see it. You know?"

I nodded against his chest. I touched the curve of his side. "Yes."

"I put in baseboards all the way around, nice stained wood. I stencilled tumbling clowns across them, and yellow tulips. I replaced the bed with a crib made of white painted wicker. Then I hung a mobile above the crib—blue waves and silver dolphins. Every detail, Jun-Hee."

I closed my eyes and imagined the room for myself.

"In place of our dresser I put one made of the same painted wicker, with drawers that smelled like cedar and a cloth top, for changing diapers, that smelled of talcum. In place of the desk went the bassinet and a hamper."

I touched his stomach and I heard his voice from within his chest. He bent one knee and turned close against me.

"On the wall I hung a bright-faced clock with fat numbers and a mouse on the minute hand. Everything. When I was done I looked at the alarm clock in our room and it had taken me two full hours. Just to imagine it and plan it out. I still couldn't sleep, though, so I got out of bed and went down the hall. I walked through the room for a while and I looked out the window, past the crib." He paused. "I imagined the view in the morning."

I touched the deep curve above his hip and I closed my eyes. I thought of where I had been that night, with the child and my mother, while Tanner built his nursery. It seemed to me, here and now, that the accumulation of six years of marriage hadn't closed the distances I had thought it would.

When he spoke again, his voice had come back beside me. "It's the coldest room in the house—I thought about it later. It's on that corner with just the one duct. It never would have worked."

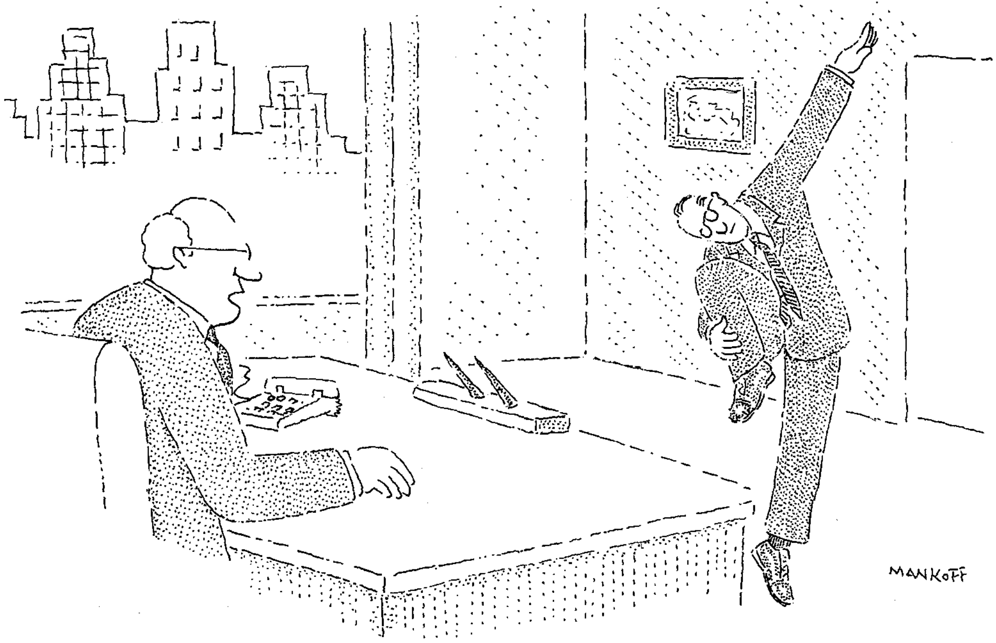
"It could have," I said.

"No, it's too far from our room. We wouldn't have heard the baby when it woke at night and began to cry."

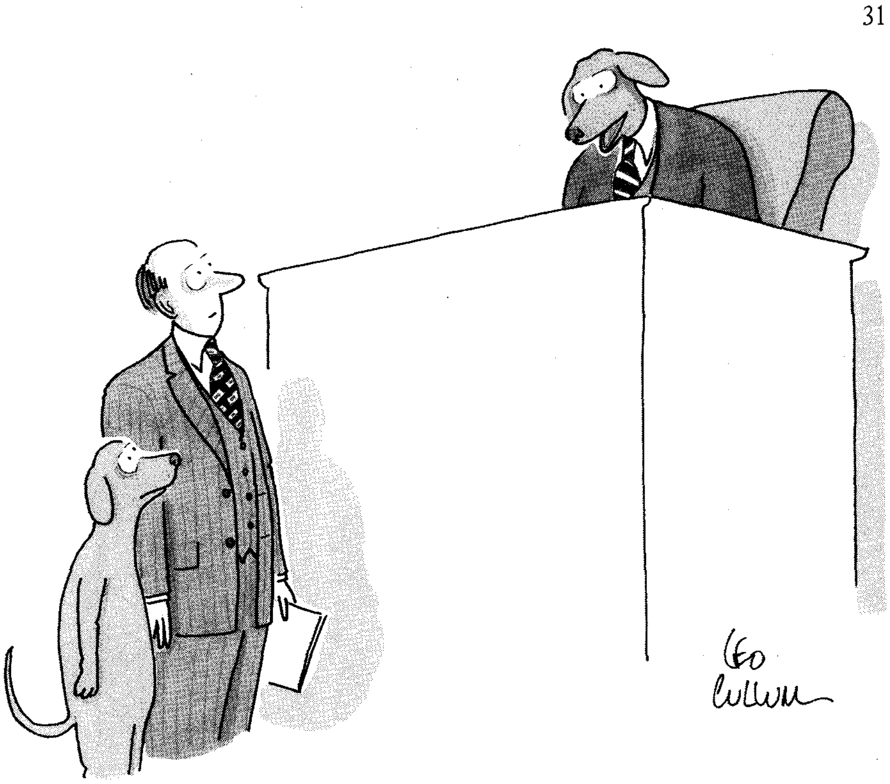
"We would have," I said.

HE hit himself on the thumb with a hammer—not a hard thing to do, really. Then he got a sleeve caught in some kind of standup drill, but it only scratched his wrist and ripped the shirt. I told him he should stay in his office more, maybe stick to the telephone and a dull pencil. "Thanks for the confidence," he said. "That's exactly what Frank said—for the sake of the company insurance policy if not for my own good."

The next day he decided we needed a trip. He planned the whole thing out before springing it on me. We would go up to New Hampshire and hike in the White Mountains, a "someday" he'd been talking about for quite a while. We could do two day-hikes, and find a cheap motel for the Saturday night between. Friday, on the way up, we would spend with his mother—who was beginning to recover from her stroke—at her house in White River Junction.



"Say what's on your mind, Harris—the language of dance has always eluded me."



“I’m going to disqualify myself.”

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It all sounded right to me and we just did it. We both had the vacation day coming, we both knew the break was overdue; we simply decided to take it the very next weekend, and packed.

The day before we left, I got our monthly checking statement in the mail. There were two checks written by Tanner to a Janet Holden, each for a hundred dollars and each written on a payday. It took me a minute to realize that Janet Holden was the woman who had hit Tanner’s car, the woman with no insurance. At first there was something like jealousy, but it didn’t take long for the feeling to pass. I wondered why he hadn’t said anything—I was the one who balanced our checkbook, so paying with a check was as good as telling me. I wondered if she had asked for this, and how they decided on exactly a hundred dollars for each check. I felt a little angry, too—we already had close to a thousand dollars in repair bills from the two car accidents, and I wondered how long he intended to keep up these payments. I didn’t want to play the role of the nagging wife, or to give him the role of the good-hearted but misunderstood husband, so I decided to let him come and explain it to me. I left the statement out on our desk, so he would know that I had seen it.

That night he said nothing, though I was sure he’d seen the statement. Friday morning we packed up the car and left.

WE took the back way, up some beautiful roads, through the Berkshires on Route 7 and into Vermont. Tanner worried about seeing his mother again. It had been four months since a stroke left her virtually paralyzed from the neck down. He had spent a week and a half with her when she got out of the hospital, and we’d been up twice since. She had a full-time nurse and refused to live anywhere but in her own home—a fact that bothered Tanner but that went right along with everything I had admired in her since we’d first met. Besides, I was pretty sure that Tanner’s real complaint about her stubbornness had nothing to do with her well-being. He wanted either the confident, independent, and aggressively healthy mother he had always had or a withered and resigned shell that he could remember her in. This in-between stuff scared him—could this person who had to be fed and bathed and changed by a nurse still be the same mother who had raised him? I never would have told Tanner any of this, but I saw that his mother knew it, too. There was a small distance between them since the stroke, and I could tell it hurt them both.

The live-in nurse, whose name was Mrs. Carlis, greeted us from the doorway of his mother’s house. “There they are,” she called as we stepped out of the car. “Right on time.” She was a loud and smothering person, sometimes to the point of being patronizing. The kind of woman who wore no makeup on principle, and was sure to tell you so within an hour of meeting you. She made me laugh.

Tanner’s mother was charming and affectionate, clearly excited about our sudden visit. Tanner kissed her cheek and took her folded hands from her lap. He squatted before her wheelchair and whispered something to her; I looked out the window to let them be alone. In a minute his mother said, “Oh, stop it. Get lost now, and let me talk to your wife.”

We all sat through the last of the afternoon on her patio. Tanner actually blushed as he went through the list of accidents for his mother, and she smiled with concern and sadness. Occasionally she asked Mrs. Carlis to cross or uncross her legs for her, or to find her sun hat. In the time since our last visit, I had forgotten the stillness with which she listened to people now—her concentration was both flattering and intimidating. But Mrs. Carlis carried the burden of *tsks* and sighs and waved hands for both of them. “Oh, no,” Mrs. Carlis said to Tanner. “Oh, that’s terrible. My goodness, what you’ve been through.”

His mother said, “Do you expect more damage, or is this it now?”

Tanner shrugged. “If I knew—you know. I don’t *expect* anything else; I didn’t expect any of it.”

“That’s good,” she said. “Don’t lose your confidence, Tanner.” She smiled. “Just the same, we’ll go with paper plates and plastic knives for dinner, I suppose.” We laughed.

In the evening Tanner went out for ice cream and Mrs. Carlis disappeared into her room. “One thing I’ll give her,” Tanner’s mother whispered to me, “she’s careful to allow me some privacy.”

“That’s important,” I said.

“Yes. She’s O.K. She’s better than you might think. Sometimes I like her chatter—it keeps me from feeling lonely. And when I’m tired of her, I say so. She understands.”

I nodded. She asked me about Tanner—what I thought was causing all of his accidents. I said I didn't know, but I couldn't believe it was just coincidence anymore. "No," she said, "I think he's expecting things to go wrong. There's something in the way he walks, I think. Maybe the eyes—I'm not sure what." Then she said what we were both really thinking, a talent of hers. "I believe it's his way of dealing with the miscarriage."

She waited for my reaction. I didn't like the word "miscarriage"; I thought it laid the blame on me, as though I had mishandled my own uterus. I instantly felt a powerful urge to tell her my dream, though—to explain what had really happened and to hear her advice.

When I was still quiet she asked, "How about you? Any of your own self-punishment? Any feelings of guilt?" There was empathy in her voice, nothing accusing or patronizing. I had given up comparisons to my own mother a long time ago, but there were still moments of envy.

"I don't know," I said. "There's guilt, sure. Sometimes I wonder how much we really wanted a baby. You know we never planned to have any."

"Yes."

I wanted to tell her; the whole dream was there, and until that moment I hadn't realized quite how heavy it was for me to carry alone. My father had certainly been no help. But the truth was I really didn't know this woman as well as I sometimes pretended to. I was afraid of her reaction, and maybe a little selfish about the dream by now.

I said, "Tanner thinks it was all for the best, that maybe we weren't ready for her."

"It was a girl?"

I was momentarily shocked—I had never thought twice. "I guess so. In my mind it was." We both heard Tanner's car come up the driveway.

She said, "I hope you won't feel I'm butting in if I tell you this: no one is ever ready, Jun-Hee. It's the people who think they're ready who end up in trouble. You should try again. Tanner told me what the doctor said—that it was an isolated thing—and I think the best way for both of you to get over this is to try again. You'll have a perfect child this time."

The front door opened and Tanner came in, wiping his feet on the mat. I was thankful for his timing, because I didn't know what to say. He held up a plastic bag with a quart of ice cream inside. "Mint chocolate chip," he announced—it was my favorite.

THAT night we slept together in the twin bed that had been Tanner's since childhood. Each time we slept over, we both went through the shifting positions that I remembered from the nights we'd spent together in college: lying close and entangled at first, separating slowly as our limbs became numb and sleep began to feel more important than intimacy, finally dividing the narrow bed into individual spaces, like children in the back seat of a car.

Tonight I found myself unable to sleep. I lay with my back to Tanner and my cold feet tucked beneath his calves. The shades on the windows were pulled, and they gave the darkness of the room a depth and a texture. I imagined that I could see the waves of Tanner's even breath, the way I have sometimes seen the landscape of music. I let myself fall into the ebb and the flow, but there was still the loneliness.

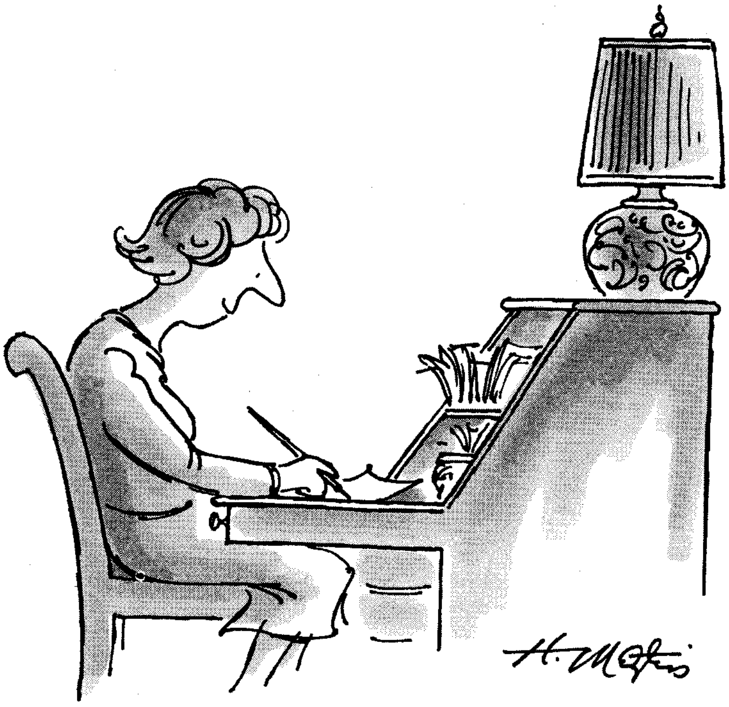
And the distance. I had been in this country for a long time, two years of high school and into college, with the phone calls and my mother weeping and the letters full of affection and guilt, before I understood that the distance was inside me, that it was me. She told me that when I was born she had an idea; she claimed it came to her in the painful moments of my birth, when nothing else could get through: she saw before her each year of my life, each its own instant, a rapid film from birth to death. She saw that I would live long, that I would age well, with a straight back.

The first birthdays I don't remember, of course, though I have seen the photos. They dressed me in a silk kimono—royal blue, a new size each year. My parents were not wealthy when I was young, and this was an unusual extravagance. By my thirteenth birthday, the robes were hanging in their own closet—a rising sea of blue—each worn only once.

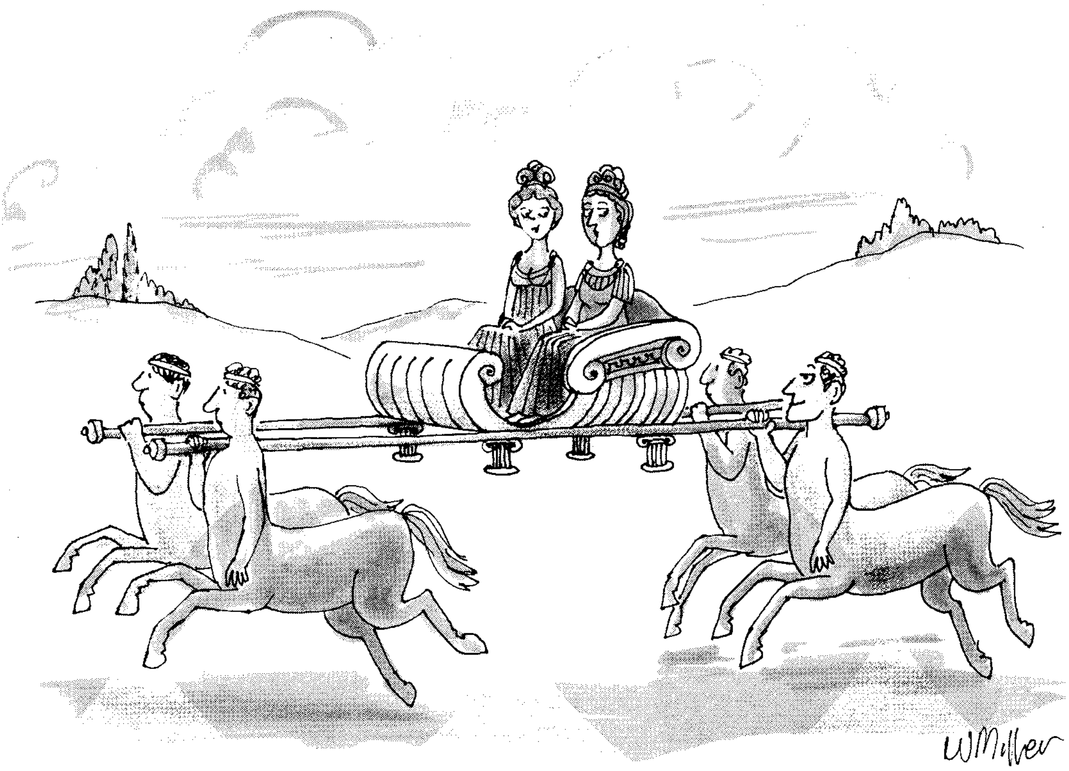
In the earliest years that I can recall, when I was five and six, there was expectation and excitement. Before dawn my mother would come with a candle, and the new robe folded over one arm, and a wide smile—a rare gift. Together we dressed me in the thick whispers of the fabric and in our ceremonial silence. Her hands moved continuously—straightening, creasing, cupping, nervous.

My father would have the camera ready on a crude stand—they counted floorboards to be sure of the distance. I stood before the screen that had come from a fisherman in my mother's village, three generations before her. It was a dream: the carp leapt from the river and danced, each tree held its own moon. My shoulders back, arms by my sides, I stared straight into the camera.

When I was positioned,



"Dear H. & T. Plumbing Company: Thank you so much for the handy little desk calendar for 1991. What a thoughtful and useful gift."



"The left rear has nice eyes."

• •

my father and my mother took their places behind the camera and together we waited for dawn. I had been born at dawn—the timing was important. The long window behind them faced east to the bald hills, but they stood with their backs to it, their eyes set on me. I had to watch the camera, but I learned how wide peripheral vision could be. They stood together but never close, my father's hand on the camera, my mother's heavy stare watching for the first rosy light to fall across my cheeks. With each year this stiff wait began to swallow the rest of the ceremony. I learned to dread my birthday. When I was young I thought that it was customary, that everyone went through this. Later I was embarrassed; I stopped telling friends and nagged my mother until she hid the blue kimonos in a box under the bed.

In the photos the progression was clear: the shadings in my face from pride to concentration to boredom and resentment. I knew early that these photos belonged to my mother, that they were her prophecy fulfilled. But for each year I have an image of my own as well. In mine her own progression is the same: from pride to sadness and disappointment. There is the morning, coming through the windows to surround her, and the stillness, the empty promise. Sometimes I flinched at the click of the camera, suddenly remembering that I was posing, that this was a year of my life.

I listened to Tanner's deep breathing. I eased my legs out of the covers and tiptoed to the door. In the living room I found the phone easily—here the shades were up and the night was full of the moon. I dialled my father's number while counting the hours: he would be just home from work.

The connection was bad—pops and clicks, the muffled echo of the ring. It occurred to me that I had nothing to say to him, that he was only a way to her. His phone rang. I struggled for some connection, some way to get to my dream, but eventually I realized that no one would answer. He wasn't home. I hung up the phone and sat back on the couch. The nighttime was pale through the windows.

I waited. Then I reached my arms out and I felt the small weight and warmth, supported in my hands. I lunged forward—in that instant I didn't have to think or decide, because she was falling. I reached out and took her from the air. I took her in and I whispered to her. I held her hard against my chest.

IT was really only a drizzle on the road the next morning, and sometimes it stopped completely for a stretch. The sky was all grey, though, with no sign of light. When we were almost there we stopped at a visitors' center and asked a forest ranger about trail conditions. The woman smiled her way through a long list of warnings: trails may be wet and footing slippery, step with care; temperatures can drop thirty degrees in a matter of hours, always pack prepared; conditions above tree line can change in minutes, keep an eye on the sky. She talked us out of Mt. Madison—not today—and recommended a peak called Mt. Hale instead. She sold us a map and pointed out the most dangerous trails. Her brown uniform was starched and she never bent her back. "Enjoy your stay in the White Mountains," she said.

We drove the few miles to the trailhead, Tanner imitating her perfect posture, and parked our car by the narrow opening through the trees. We checked the map once more, then started up the first trail to the Hale mountain cutoff. There were exposed roots and shallow puddles all over the trail, but we were wearing sneakers and the footing wasn't really so bad. In the distance, whichever way you looked, the trees seemed to mesh with the low sky into a gauzy gray. Occasional branches stretched across the trail and showered us when we cleared the way.

Tanner was bubbly, happy to be here at last. He decided the weather would clear when we were at the top and tomorrow would be a perfect day and we would probably see some deer or moose. I laughed.

We crossed a fast river on a footbridge and soon the trail began to rise more sharply. The rain picked up a little, but we could hardly tell beyond the sound it made on the ceiling of leaves above us. Our breathing picked up as well, and I could feel the sweat run down my back and the insides of my arms. We began to take short breaks, to rest our calves and to take the packs from our shoulders. At one point there was a rocky, exposed outcropping, and the day was full of fog. Below us the trees fell off into a green carpet and were lost.

It happened slowly, but somewhere along the way the mountain became much steeper. We took breaks more often, but we didn't talk much—in a way, it didn't seem necessary. We smiled, though; we were both having fun.

At some point I began to think about the woman with the car who hit Tanner—I couldn't remember her name. I thought of asking him right then about the checks, but the trail zigzagged up a sharp slope, and it just seemed like too much effort. Soon I decided that I wouldn't ask, that he had no right to play this silence game when he knew that I knew. The whole thing reminded me of something my father would do.

Maybe we were both a little lost in thought, but it seemed that suddenly the trees were much shorter and the fog was tight and cool. "We must be close to tree line," Tanner said, and in a few minutes we were there. The trees receded into tough, squat shrubs and we were literally in a cloud. It was fantastic. You could only see maybe a hundred feet in any direction and the mist rolled and tumbled across the rocks and up the mountain. It wasn't really raining now, but the fog was so heavy that it turned into drops on our parkas. In only a minute, there were diamonds sown through Tanner's hair and across his eyebrows and hanging, even, from his lashes.

"This is strange," he said.

"It's amazing." The silence was fuzzy and hollow, as if it would swallow up even a scream. Tanner took my hand, and I realized how wonderfully alone we were. How isolated—we hadn't come upon another hiker all day.

"What time do you think it is?" he asked me. I looked at my watch; it was past twelve-thirty.

"Well," he said, "what do you think?"

He was asking what we should do, and I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe he could actually consider turning back. "We must be pretty close," I said. "The weather's the same as it's been all day; it's not even raining, really. Where's that map? Let's see where we are."

We looked at the map but we didn't know how to tell how far we had come. It didn't show any tree line, and on the back it explained that the level varied in different places across the mountain, depending on exposure.

"We can't be too far," I said. "I can't imagine giving up now."

"O.K."

"We can have lunch at the peak. Maybe it'll clear a little and we'll get a view. Who knows?"

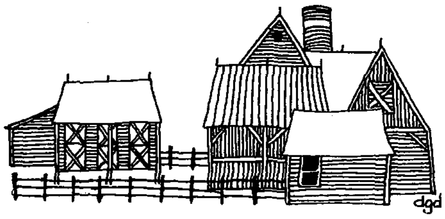
"O. K.," he said.

"Tanner. Do you want to do this?"

"Yeah." He nodded and avoided my eyes. Finally he looked at me. "Yes, I do. I really do. Let's just keep an eye on the sky, as our friendly ranger says."

It didn't take long for the shrubs to give way to bare rock, with rock piles stacked a few feet high to show the trail. At first we could see two or three markers ahead, but eventually the fog revealed only one at a time. The cloud moved past us and straight up the mountain, and I imagined that it could carry us, that we could close our eyes and let ourselves be lifted to the peak and across it into the sky.

Just when we were both beginning



COVENANT

For an instant there was a silent
covenant in the Egyptian Museum
in Turin: objects and people,
crowded showcases, noisy children
from a German excursion, watchful mummies,
lips pursed tight as the mouths
of commanders before battle,
burned in the long fire of contemplation,
the pyramids' granite, small statues
that shielded against death
and damnation until they were snatched
from Egypt and could serve no one,
nail clippers three thousand years old,
my heart, patient as a boy
who stammers, and jolly Italian families
enjoying living and their Sunday.
Close together, timid, yet
with no enmity, we were equals,
and equally watchful of each other.
Time, like a copper hairpin,
slipped from the locks of an Egyptian princess.
Indifferently, almost amicably,
we looked at one another, various generations
of the same world, mute and imperfect
objects of desire and forgetting,
instruments of pain and love.
Even smooth knives that put an end to yearning
were lying calmly on shelves, and maybe regretted
the sudden tremors, night stabs
in the breast, deceit and ignominy.
Outside, on the dark-yellow walls of houses,
the sun was quickly writing festive
proclamations of January.

—ADAM ZAGAJEWSKI

(*Translated, from the Polish, by Renata Gorczynski and Benjamin Ivry.*)

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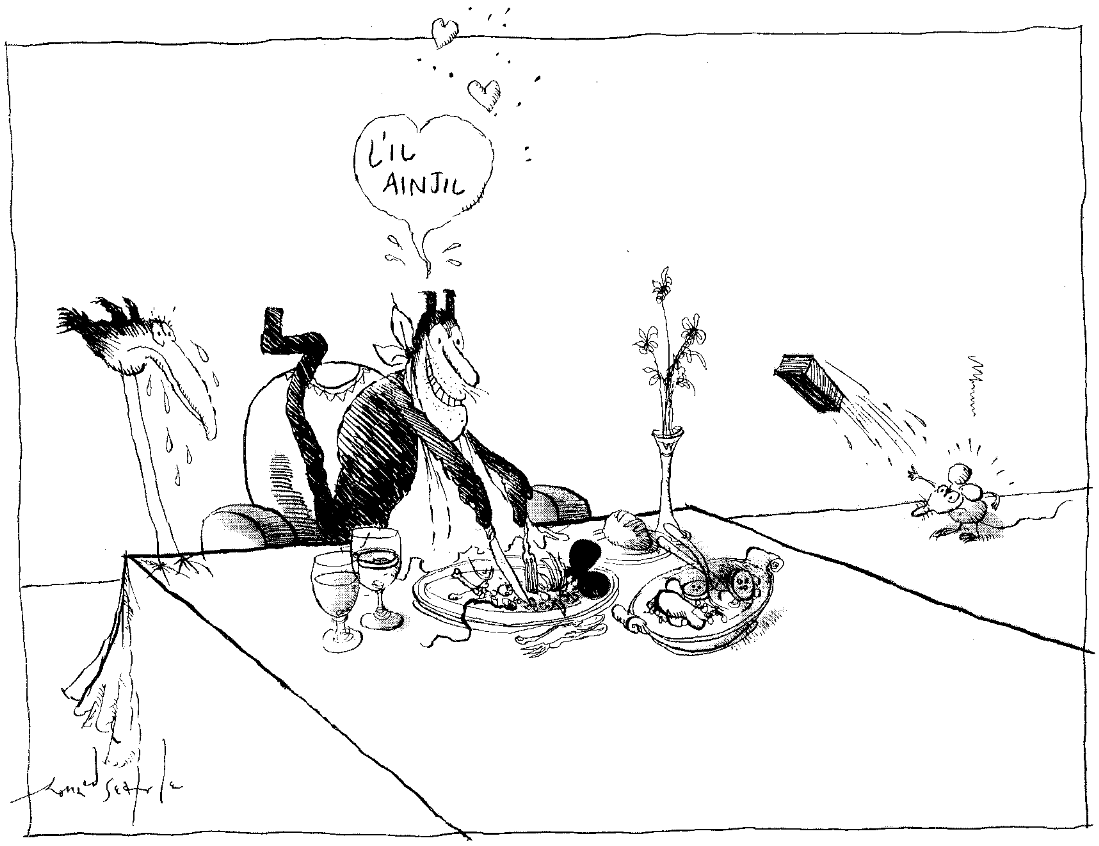


CROSSED PATHS

Krazy Kat Meets Mickey Mouse

• •

to lose some confidence (at least I was; Tanner's concerned expression looked set and permanent) we came to a wooden sign knocked in between the rocks. It marked the separation of two trails. One way led down a half mile to a mountain hut, and the other a mile up to the peak of Mt. Hale. We took the Hale fork, and for a while it was mostly flat—even downhill in places—and we moved quickly. At one point Tanner made a small jump between rocks, but his foot slid when he landed. He skinned the palm of one hand and tore a small hole in the knee of his jeans.

"Put some antibiotic on your hand," I said.

He shook his head. "I don't want any. I'm fine." He didn't look at me.

Soon the trail turned back uphill, as we both knew it had to, and I began to wonder if our cloud wasn't getting darker. For the first time, the possibility of a thunderstorm occurred to me. I couldn't understand why we hadn't made the peak yet, and I kept looking ahead for the levelling off and the top of the mountain.

Then Tanner just stopped. I sensed everything right away, but when he said, "I don't know where the trail went," I came very close to crying. We looked in all directions for a marker.

"Let's backtrack," I said, but we each had a different idea of the way we'd come. For a few minutes I followed Tanner, but I knew he was going too directly downward—we had come up and across.

"This is wrong," I said. "I think the trail's to the right some." But he kept walking. I stopped. "Tanner. You already got us lost. You don't know where you're going." Now he stopped. He sat down heavily and lay back against his pack. There was something unnatural and afraid in his face.

I knelt beside him. "We can't be far, really. Why don't we look at the map?"

He held his hands interlocked over his closed eyes, the palms outward. One was spotted with thin lines of blood from the scratches. He shook his head. "What good is the map if we're not on a trail? We don't even know how to use the fucking thing."

I felt it all drain out of me—my energy, maybe, my confidence, any last traces of enthusiasm I had for this trip. I said, "When's the last time you remember seeing a marker? How long ago?" He shook his head. "Tanner, what's the matter? Are you sick or something? You're acting strange."

I expected him to open his eyes, to sit up and take my hand or even to smile. But all he did was shake his head again. "You're scaring me," I said. Finally he opened his eyes and sat up with a grunt.

"Let's eat lunch." I took my pack off and opened it. "Let's eat something and have some water and try to think about this without panicking. All right, Tanner?"

Tanner closed his eyes and nodded. I was thankful for a reaction that made sense. He took his pack off.

"I don't know what I was thinking," Tanner said. He bit into a sandwich and stared at the rocks and the fog. "I thought I could tell the trail by the smooth rocks. I forgot about the markers." He laughed. "*All* the rocks are smooth."

We cut straight across the mountain and I kept thinking I saw the vague form of a marker emerging, but it never happened. I kept my watch out now—it was already close to three, and in this weather it would be dark well before eight. I began to lead and Tanner followed me with his head down, watching each step. I got angry. "Tanner, what are you doing? You're not even looking for the trail."

"I don't want to slip again," he said. He held his palm up for me.

"Let's stop a minute and put something on that. Please?"

We got out the first-aid kit and I rubbed antibiotic cream into his cuts. "I figure if we find the trail," I said, just thinking of it then, "we can follow it to that hut. It's not very far, and maybe we could spend the night there.” It occurred to me that I was treating him like a child. “You lead,” I said.

Tanner seemed to look ahead for the trail now, and I found my mind wandering. I imagined that if the sun burned through for just a minute or two we would see the markers and the shape of the mountain around us. Maybe the trail would be right there, a few yards away. Suddenly, for no reason, the name came to me—Janet Holden. I could see it written across the cancelled checks. I felt lonely; I felt lost in a world so far from all of that. I told myself, We woke up this morning in Tanner’s tiny bed in White River. Tonight we’ll sleep in a lumpy motel bed, or in a sleeping bag at the warm hut. I promised myself that I’d be thankful.

Janet Holden, Janet Holden. It ran through my mind with each step I took, like a drumbeat. I couldn’t get rid of it. Janet Holden.

When it was almost five o’clock, my shoulders were burning under the pack and my legs were rubber. I realized, at last, that Tanner had completely given up. I felt that this was the overdue end of a long collapse for him, and I was both sorry and angry. I was angry at the pity I felt, too, and at the fact that he had come to this. I found that there was some small part of me, somewhere behind my ribs, that could hate him. But this wasn’t Tanner anymore; I was alone.

At some point I began to cry, and I sat down and let it come. Tanner lay back on the rock beside me, acting as though he couldn’t hear me. I got so angry that I punched him hard on the arm. He jumped and glared at me.

“Oh, he lives!” I yelled. “He still feels pain—thank God for that.”

Tanner rubbed his arm. I was busy crying and I didn’t notice the change, but after a while he spoke. “We should go down,” he said softly.

“What?”

“We should go *down*. Straight down. We’d have shelter in the trees. We might be able to find water.”

I continued to cry, despite myself. I hugged him and leaned against him, though the anger was still there. “You had no right to leave me alone,” I said. “You can’t do that—you had no right.”

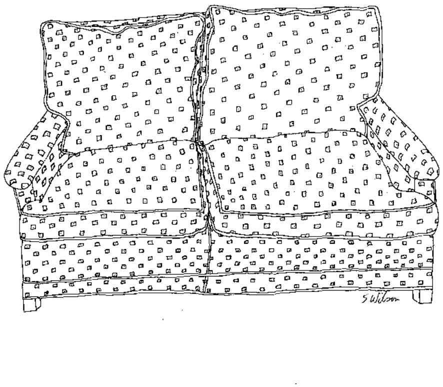
He did hug me back. When I was under some kind of control, he stood and helped me up. He said, “Let’s get to the trees, at least,” and started down. I watched him a minute. It seemed to me that I would have a hard time forgiving him for this. I had the feeling of some kind of ending—not of our marriage or anything as easy at that. I didn’t know what. It was the feeling I had the morning I lost the child.

The way down was steep, and the silence of the fog wrapped thickly around me. I listened for my own breathing, but that sound was gone, too. I imagined that I could let go, just let myself lean over and begin to fall. I would tumble down the long slope; I would land in the wet embrace of a lake.

And then, in no time at all, Tanner saw the sign to the hut. He pointed and said, “There it is,” almost casually. It was the same wooden trail marker we had come to hours before. As a celebration, we ate the last of our sandwiches and a good part of our trail mix. We followed the trail down, and neither of us lost sight of the stone markers. In a few minutes, the eerie shape of the hut emerged from the muddy gray.

THERE was a couple from upstate New York who lent us sweatshirts and pants to wear while we dried our own by a kerosene heater. We had missed dinner, but one of the workers at the hut made us hot soup and coffee. At first she seemed to think I wouldn’t understand English; she leaned in to me and spoke slowly. I decided not to be offended, and when I answered her question fluently she seemed to apologize with her gestures and her smile.

Later the thunder came, distant and slow at first, then completely surrounding us. Lightning flashed across the mountain, and the shadows were quick and long. Tanner came to me; he knelt down and laid his head in my lap. He put his arms around my waist. At first I felt the stares and the murmurs from across the room. I touched his hair and his face, and I found that he was crying. I leaned across his back. I missed him, as if we were still apart. I kissed his hair and accepted his apology; it was surprisingly easy.



We slept on a wooden bunk in a borrowed sleeping bag. Tanner was asleep in a minute, and I was surprised to find myself awake. When I closed my eyes I saw an endless pattern of rocks; I felt the stepping up and the stepping down still in my bones. I opened my eyes and listened to the sound of the rain against the roof. I prayed. In Korean I recited one of the meditations I had learned as a child from my mother, the only one I could remember. I asked the bodhisattvas to help me to accept the world of *dukkha* and impermanence, to help me shed my desire to control. The world is change; I am change. Maybe I felt better—I don’t know.

My baby was gone and there was really only Tanner and I, as I had once wanted it. My mother had never been with me, not since I left Seoul. The day she died, I had pretended it didn’t matter. I went through the whole day at a distance from myself; I decided that it would take a lifetime to get back to her. My father asked me to come for the burial, and I said no.

This night I went back, though; I tried to cover the distance. It was fifteen years since I’d been in Korea, but I knew that she would not come to me, that she had made the reach already, for the last time. Fifteen years is a long way to fall, and I was afraid. I let the silence of the hut calm me.

There in the dark I said to her, I know I gave up my child. I’m sorry I let you down.

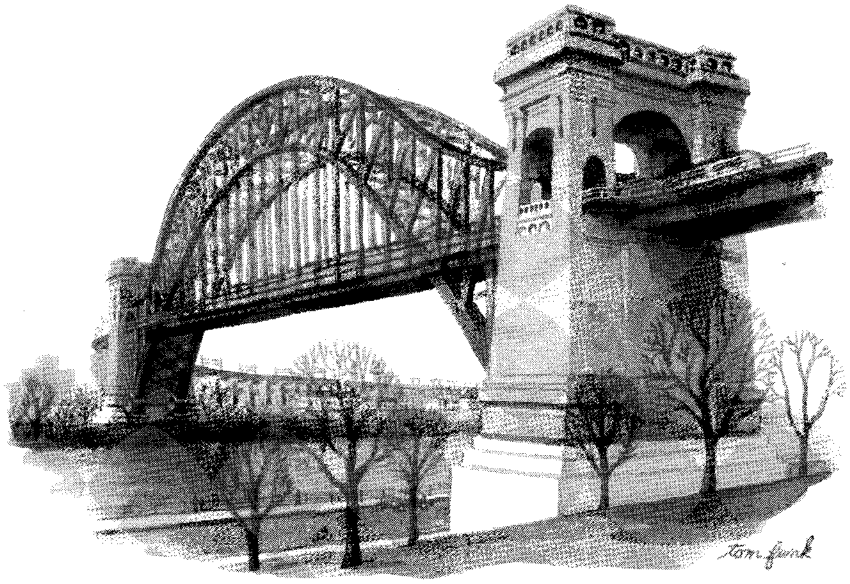
I saw her. She stood before me in a black burial gown; she lowered her eyes before her daughter. In the dream I told her, Take care of my baby, and she bowed. The clouds moved around us and across the stones, and she bowed for an eternity. I wanted to touch her skin, but she wouldn’t let me. She raised her eyes to me; she saw that I was crying.

Take care of my child, I said.

—Marshall N. Klimasewiski

A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE EIGHTH BRIDGE



EIGHT bridges cross the East River. Four of them—the Brooklyn Bridge, the Manhattan, the Williamsburg, and the Queensboro—have been in the news frequently in the past few years. They are the oldest, are owned by the city, and can be crossed free of charge. As a result of these interacting circumstances, they have all suffered from prolonged and serious neglect, which has already cost hundreds of millions of dollars to remedy and will cost many hundreds of millions more. The Williamsburg was closed for over a month in 1988 for emergency repairs. Last December 16th, engineers of the city's Department of Transportation reported that the Manhattan Bridge was in perilous condition, that the Williamsburg still had many serious structural deficiencies, and that even the Brooklyn and the Queensboro, on which hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent in recent years, still had many weak spots. On December 27th, one of the subway lines on the Manhattan Bridge was closed because of newly discovered severe corrosion, and the other was to be closed for inspection. The three newest bridges—the Triborough, the Bronx-Whitestone, and the Throgs Neck—are, by contrast, pampered darlings. They are owned by the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority, and the tolls it levies are more than sufficient to keep them gleaming with fresh paint, to attend to any structural problems that arise, to pay off its bonds, and to provide a surplus, which in 1989 was four hundred and sixty-four million dollars, to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, of which it is a part.

Whatever their condition, these seven bridges are such conspicuous landmarks that most New Yorkers could probably name at least five of them. Even a cabdriver might be able to identify two or three and drive across them without getting lost. The eighth bridge is another matter. Even in a period of heightened bridge consciousness, scarcely anyone I asked about it over a period of many months was able to provide its name or location, let alone to describe its appearance or its function.

The press also seems to be in the dark about the eighth bridge. In February of 1988, the *Times*, in a review of the corrosion-and-neglect situation, published a map that purported to show most of the city's major bridges, but there was a blank spot where the eighth bridge should have been. That May, *Newsday* printed an atmospheric photograph of a lone tug steaming under the eighth bridge, but the caption failed to mention its name, and had it crossing the wrong body of water. A bronze plaque at the base of its east tower gives the name of this mystery span as the East River Arch Bridge, but it has never been known as anything but the Hell Gate Bridge—after the name Dutch sailors gave to the narrow stretch of the river that the bridge crosses, between the Astoria section of Queens and Ward's Island, because of its turbulent currents and submerged rocks.

The Hell Gate was a lot more noticeable in 1917, when it was opened, than it seems to be nowadays. It was the longest and by far the heaviest and strongest steel-arch bridge in the world, at a time when the country rejoiced in such evidence of its energy and skill. The bridge was also the final link in one of the costliest privately financed construction projects of the industrial age—the New York Extension of the Pennsylvania Railroad. The extension brought that railroad into Manhattan, and from there to a connection with the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad in the Bronx, giving it, for the first time, a direct rail route to New England.

The Pennsy, as it was generally known, was in those days the nation's, and the world's, mightiest transportation enterprise. Penn Station was created to be its Pantheon, and the Hell Gate was to be its triumphal arch. In fact, in an editorial that appeared when the Hell Gate opened, the *Railway Age Gazette*, a trade magazine, wondered if the bridge wasn't perhaps more triumphal than was absolutely necessary. It questioned the Pennsy's decision to build a four-track bridge—the only long-span railroad bridge of that size ever built—when two tracks would have been adequate for anticipated traffic for years to come. The *Gazette* decided that the additional expenditure was justified as "an act of good citizenship, which, while it will not earn a fair money return on its cost, will be a contribution toward the common welfare and toward progress." Then, as though reluctant to appear to be endorsing railroad philanthropy, it noted the Pennsy's reputation for being able to see farther ahead than anyone else. "The Pennsylvania, it is true, builds for 50 years in the future," it stated admiringly.

If the Pennsy had known what was coming in fifty years, it would not have built the Hell Gate, or anything else. Far from heralding new triumphs, the

"*Forget the Japanese. New York is still the information capital of the world.*"

opening of the bridge marked the zenith of the power and prosperity of American railroads. From then on, everything was pretty much downhill. Excessive governmental regulation and shortsighted management played a part in the decline, but what finally did the railroads in was the passenger car, the truck, the bus, and the airplane, and a national transportation policy, or the lack of one, that was stacked in their favor. By 1963, the Pennsy was so short of cash that it decided to turn Penn Station into money. One of the great structures of the industrial age was demolished, and in its place arose an undistinguished complex of office buildings and the new Madison Square Garden. In 1968, fifty years and eleven months after the Hell Gate opened, the Pennsy and its arch-rival, the New York Central, merged in a desperate, ill-conceived, and futile effort to remain solvent. In 1970, the Penn Central, the merged company, which also included the New Haven, went bankrupt.

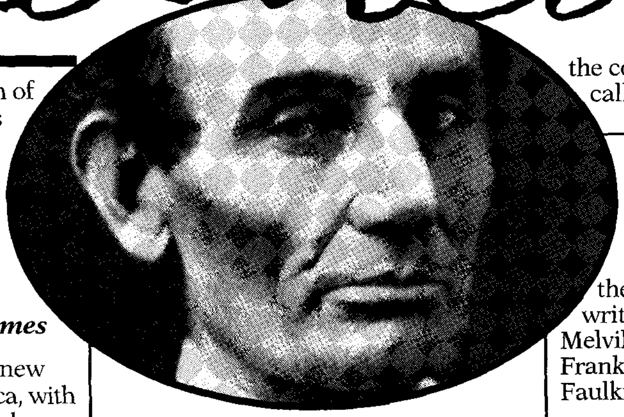
The Hell Gate and most of the four-hundred-and-fifty-seven-mile Northeast Corridor, from Washington to Boston, is now the property of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, or Amtrak, which is owned by the federal government. It was established in 1970 to operate what remained of the nation's intercity passenger service. Aside from the corridor and two feeder lines, the routes that its trains operate total twenty-four thousand miles and are owned by other railroads. The Northeast Corridor is Amtrak's most heavily travelled route, and the Hell Gate is its key link. Each weekday, thirty-four passenger trains between Penn Station and New England points, as well as two Conrail freights, roll across it. At other times, it stands silent, deserted, unseen. The bridge exists, as anachronisms often do, in a perpetual psychological twilight time. At night, even when the moon is full, its stained gray granite towers and rusting girders, unmarked even by aircraft-warning lights, become from the Manhattan shore not merely unseen but almost invisible, lost in the glare of the Triborough's street-carnival illumination. Only after midnight, when those lights are extinguished, does the Hell Gate reappear: blurred lines of dense black drawn against the shimmering silvery blackness of the river and the glow of the night sky.

PHILADELPHIA merchants founded the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1846, in a belated and unsuccessful effort to get back into competition with New York as the center of the nation's commerce. The Pennsy's early years were difficult, but it profited greatly from the Civil War, the first conflict in which railroads were the primary carriers of troops and supplies. In 1871, the Pennsy, growing in all directions, extended its service to Jersey City, and thus began tapping the enormous traffic that surged into and out of New York Harbor. However, it remained at a considerable disadvantage in respect to "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt's New York Central, which had a passenger terminal in the heart of Manhattan and ran a freight line down the West Side to serve the Hudson River piers.

For nearly half a century, passengers on the Pennsy had to cross the Hudson by ferry, which could take as little as fifteen minutes or, when fog blanketed the river, as long as an hour, and then they had to find cabs—horse-drawn, of course—or take a slogging omnibus to reach their destinations. If they were heading for New England, they had to go to Grand Central Terminal and take the New York, New Haven & Hartford. Well-to-do travellers who were willing to bypass New York could take the Federal Express, an all-sleeper night train from Washington to Boston. Its cars were put aboard the steamer Maryland at Jersey City and carried to the Port Morris yards of the New Haven, in the South Bronx. The fourteen-mile voyage took three or four hours, and it is unlikely that the jolting at both ends and the rocking afloat permitted much sleep. When it came to freight, which was the primary concern of any railroad, the Pennsy's ending up in Jersey was costly. Each day, hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of Pennsy freight cars had to be loaded on barges fitted with tracks, called car floats, and tugged around the harbor to their destinations or for transfer to other railroads.

The obvious solution to the problem—an extension of the line into Man-

A. Lincoln.



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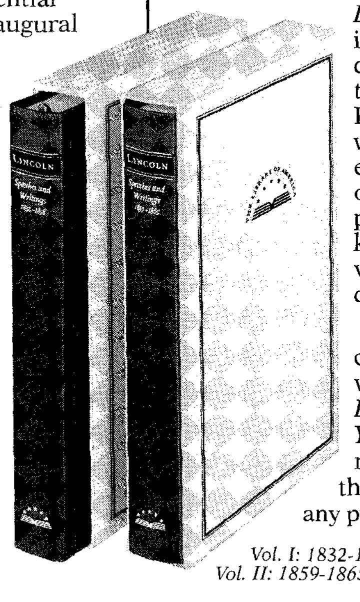
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hattan and, ideally, Brooklyn as well—seemed to be impossible. In the eighteen-seventies, no bridge had been built with a clear span anywhere near as long as the thirty-one hundred feet needed to cross the Hudson. A tunnel presented other problems. Without a way of removing the smoke and the fumes of coal-burning locomotives, passengers and train crews were likely to be suffocated before they saw daylight. An attempt to dig a tunnel under the Hudson for a cable railway ended in disaster in 1880. A blowout in the tube killed twenty workmen, leading many engineers to believe that the riverbed was dangerously unstable.

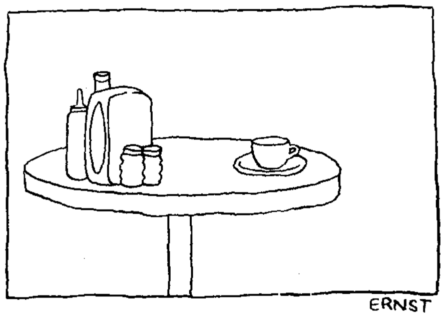
However, the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge, in 1883, convinced engineers that if a bridge of fifteen hundred and ninety-five feet could be built, so could one of twice that length. The next year, a young engineer named Gustav Lindenthal, who had built a thriving practice in Pittsburgh, drew up a detailed proposal for a Hudson River bridge. He sent it to Samuel Rea, an engineering executive of the Pennsy with whom he was friendly. Rea passed it on to his superiors with an enthusiastic endorsement. What Lindenthal had proposed was a colossal two-deck suspension bridge to run from Jersey City to Canal Street. It had ten railroad and trolley tracks, vehicular roadways, and promenades. Since even the mighty Pennsy did not generate enough traffic to justify the cost of such an undertaking, Lindenthal proposed that the other railroads that terminated on the Jersey side—the Baltimore & Ohio, the Lehigh Valley, the Erie, the Lackawanna, the Jersey Central, the Susquehanna, the Delaware & Hudson, and the New York, Ontario & Western—be invited to share in the cost of building the bridge in return for the right to use it.

The Pennsy favored the project, but the Army Corps of Engineers, whose authority extended to navigable waterways, disapproved the design, on the ground that the offshore piers on which the towers were to be built would interfere with shipping. Before Lindenthal could revise his plans, the recession of 1884 occurred, and the Pennsy decided to wait until economic conditions improved.

LINDENTHAL was an emblematic figure of the period: the intelligent and energetic young man who leaves Europe in search of opportunity in the United States, finds it, gains professional renown and financial success, enjoys the enduring love of a wife and daughter, lives in good health to a great age, and dies a profoundly disappointed man. He was born, in 1850, in Brünn, a manufacturing city in the province of Moravia, in Austria-Hungary. (Renamed Brno, it has been part of Czechoslovakia since the end of the First World War.) Autobiographical accounts he gave and entries on him in reference works state that he attended the polytechnic institutes in Brünn and Vienna. He started out as an engineer on the Austrian state railways. Then, searching for greater opportunities than were offered by the sclerotic Hapsburgian bureaucracy, he went to Switzerland and, later, to the United States.

Lindenthal landed in New York in 1874. A financial panic the preceding year had dried up engineering jobs, so he went to Philadelphia and found work as a mason on buildings that were being erected for the Centennial International Exposition. (At his father's insistence, Lindenthal said, he had gained practical experience by working as a mason and carpenter during his school vacations.) He studied English at night, and when he was able to tell his employers of his other qualifications he was promoted to the drafting department.

In 1881, Lindenthal opened an office of his own in Pittsburgh. The city, which was then changing over from iron to steel production, was booming. Its road and rail networks were expanding, and the tumbled topography of the Alleghenies required many bridges, trestles, and tunnels. It was a period in which Lindenthal's formal education would have proved particularly valuable. Steel, as its price declined, began to replace iron and timber in bridge construction. The greater strength of steel meant that longer and stronger bridges could be built with less material, and, in the long run, at lower cost. The question was: How much less material? Bridges collapsed or became perilously weakened often enough to cause their builders to worry as much about false economy as about needless expense. In that period, few American engineers had degrees. Their seat-of-the-pants judgments had almost always been adequate, and occasionally brilliant, but now the combination of longer bridges, heavier locomotives an freight cars, and higher speeds pos problems that demanded scientific rather than practical solutions.



Lindenthal soon received a major commission—for a three-hundred-and-fifty-foot bridge, carrying vehicular traffic and two trolley tracks, across the Monongahela River at Smithfield Street in Pittsburgh. His design was inspired by Isambard Kingdom Brunel's graceful Royal Albert Bridge, of 1859, over the Tamar River at Saltash, England. Lindenthal used the same double-elliptical, or lenticular, trusses, resembling horizontal parentheses placed face-to-face. The price of steel was still high enough to limit its use in the bridge to what engineers call tension members—girders subjected to bending and pulling forces. Wrought iron could still be used quite satisfactorily for compression members—girders subjected to downward forces. In 1883, the American Society of Civil Engineers awarded its Rowland Prize to Lindenthal for his paper on the design and construction of the Smithfield Street Bridge. Now designated a national historic landmark, the bridge is one of the few nineteenth-century steel-and-iron spans still in service in this country.

While enlarging his reputation in Pittsburgh, Lindenthal kept an eye on New York. He, like every other ambitious bridge engineer, was aware that the city was the only place that satisfied all the conditions for the building o great bridges. It was the center of the nation's commerce and finance, it had the largest population and was growing rapidly, and Manhattan, its hub, was an island.

Moreover, during the planning of the Brooklyn Bridge, the Army Corps of Engineers, which had jurisdiction over navigable waterways, established a minimum bridge clearance of a hundred and thirty-five feet at high tide to permit the passage of warships and passenger liners, and construction beyond a pierhead line was prohibited. Only bridges with a single span, soaring towers, and long approaches could meet these rules. Long-span bridges were among the costliest and most complex utilitarian structures of the time. They also provided a chance for engineers to show, quite literally, what they could do. In most structures, the engineering tended to be what was hidden by the architecture, but in a bridge the engineering, in effect, *was* architecture, and it could possess a beauty of its own. The Brooklyn Bridge, with its shimmering web of cables, its slender latticed girders, and its buttressed masonry towers, not only provided an optimal solution to an engineering problem in terms of strength and cost but also was transformed by the genius of John and Washington Roebling into a work of art expressed in shape, mass, rhythm, and the play of light.

IN 1890, with economic conditions improving, Lindenthal moved his office to New York and renewed his campaign for the Hudson River bridge. The design was largely unchanged, but the site was moved from Canal Street to Twenty-third Street, where the river was narrower and the piers could be placed closer to shore; the passenger terminal was to be built at Sixth Avenue. Instead of trying to get the railroads to build it coöperatively, Lindenthal organized the North River Bridge Company. (The Hudson has been known as the North River and the Delaware as the South River in maritime usage since colonial days.) He had secured the backing of Thomas Fortune Ryan, a New York financier, who controlled scores of streetcar, utilities, and insurance companies, and Garret A. Hobart, a power in New Jersey Republican politics. Their plan was to sell stocks and bonds to raise the funds to build the bridge, so that the railroads need not tie up their money, and to levy tolls on them and all other users. (Hobart, who became Vice-President in the first Administration of President William McKinley, died in office in 1899, opening the way for Theodore Roosevelt to take his place on the ticket in 1900.)

Once again, however, Lindenthal found his bridge a pawn of larger economic forces. In that period, contractions, recessions, or depressions, often preceded by stock-market panics

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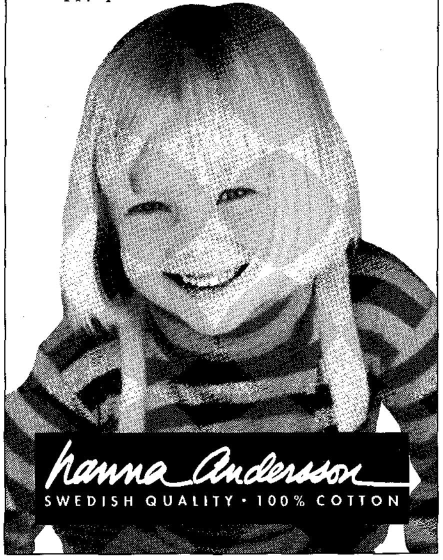

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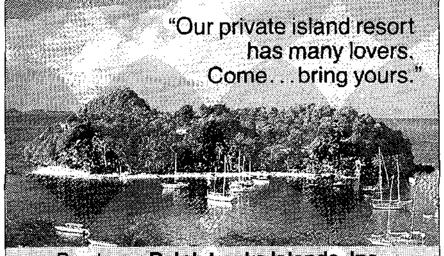

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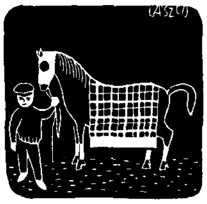
precipitated by the unchecked manipulations of speculators, frequently in shaky railroad stocks, came along every ten years or so. The consequences of the panic of 1893 were unusually severe and prolonged. The Pennsy rode it out, but several of the railroads that might have used the bridge went into receivership, and once again the project was put aside. In 1899, when times were better, Lindenthal tried a third time. The Pennsy was still interested, but the other railroads still weren't.

That turned out to be Lindenthal's last real chance to build the bridge. In that year, the Pennsy got a new president, Alexander J. Cassatt, who was becoming convinced that the electrified railroad lines that were being built in Europe would permit trains to operate in underwater tunnels, making a bridge unnecessary. In 1901, Cassatt, who was in Paris visiting his sister, observed the opening of the electrified Orléans line. It removed any lingering doubts, and in 1901 he formed a board of engineering experts from inside and outside the company to begin drawing up plans for a grand project, the New York Extension and Improvement.



One great advantage of a pair of single-track tunnels, which the engineering board decided would be adequate, was that the Pennsy could afford to build them for its exclusive use. Samuel Rea, who was by then one of the line's senior engineering executives, saw to it that his old friend Lindenthal became a member of the engineering board, and, eventually, was chosen to design the Hell Gate Bridge, the final segment of the project.

Cassatt is scarcely remembered nowadays, but he was an extraordinary figure, not least because his upbringing was more suggestive of the genteel world of Henry James than the gritty turmoil of Howells or Dreiser. He was born in Pittsburgh, in 1839, at a time when his father was getting rich as a banker and a land speculator. A sister, Mary, was born in 1844. The family moved to Philadelphia, and thereafter the elder Cassatt was apparently more interested in enjoying his wealth than in adding to it. When Alexander was twelve, the Cassatts moved on to Europe, residing at various times in London and Paris and several cities in Germany. Alexander attended school in all those places, became fluent in German and French, and was graduated from a *Gymnasium* in Darmstadt. He returned to the United States in 1856 to enter Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. His biographer, Patricia T. Davis, states that he spoke English with a German accent and an often uncertain grasp of idiom. His parents, who finally settled in Paris, made only one brief visit to the United States in the years that followed. His sister, who lived with them, studied painting, became a member of the circle of Degas, Monet, and Pissarro, and is regarded as the most accomplished of the American Impressionists.

After his graduation, Cassatt became a member of a railroad surveying crew in Georgia. Seeing war coming, he went North and joined the Pennsy. He did not go into uniform—he may have hired a substitute—but he was surely more valuable working for the railroad than he would have been with a sabre in his hand. Cassatt moved up fast. His superiors were impressed by his ability to lead rough men doing rough work, and also by his good looks, good manners, and unobtrusive cosmopolitanism. He married a niece of former President James Buchanan, who was living in retirement in his family home near Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

By 1873, Cassatt was the general manager of the lines east of Pittsburgh and Erie, the heart of the system. By 1880, he was the first vice-president of the entire railroad, but he had reason to think he would be its next president. The position went to someone else, however. Cassatt resigned in 1882, but so utterly without rancor that he was asked to return as a member of the board of directors. Heading a group of investors, and with the assistance of the Pennsy, he built a railroad from Wilmington down the Delmarva Peninsula to Cape Charles that continued across the Chesapeake Bay by barge to Norfolk. It was purchased by the Pennsy in 1909.

In 1897, when the presidency of the Pennsy again became vacant, it was thought that Cassatt might take the post, but he made no attempt to secure it. When the man who was chosen died, in 1899, the board offered it to Cassatt, and he accepted. The Pennsy's profits were declining, and it seemed to be drifting. Adroit leadership was needed. Although Cassatt had turned sixty, he was bursting with energy and ideas. He restored the profits by establishing what became known as a "community of interest" with the New York Central. The two railroads, like sovereign states, established spheres of influence by buying enough stock in smaller lines to end rate-cutting wars. The "Centennial History" of the Pennsy, covering events from 1846 to 1946, quotes the minutes of a meeting of the Board of Directors as speaking, [illegible] inaccurately, of "the rebates extorted by large shippers under a threat to divert their traffic."

By 1903, Cassatt had succeeded so well that he was able to begin construction of the New York Extension. The first phase comprised a double-track line across the Hackensack Meadows; the tunnels under the Bergen Cliffs, at the south end of the Palisades, and the Hudson River; Pennsylvania Station, covering the area between Seventh and Eighth Avenues and Thirty-first and Thirty-third Streets; four single-track tunnels under Manhattan and the East River to Sunnyside, Queens, where the largest passenger-car yard in the world was to be built. Two of the East River tunnels were to be used by the Long Island Rail Road, which then terminated on the river at Long Island City. Cassatt, with the extension in mind, had bought it for the Pennsy in 1900.

The second phase, the New York Connecting Railroad, was to be started after the first phase was completed. The line, which was only eight and nine-tenths miles long, began at the Sunnyside Yard, followed a sweeping curve on an embankment in Long Island City and then on a viaduct that rose across Astoria to the Hell Gate Bridge. From there it ran north by viaduct across Ward's Island; by bridge across a shallow thousand-and-fifty-foot body of water called Little Hell Gate (Robert Moses, who preferred filling in bodies of water to crossing them, caused Little Hell Gate to cease to exist); by viaduct across Randall's Island; by bridge across the Bronx Kill, which was then six hundred feet wide (Moses and his followers condensed it into a stagnant rivulet scarcely fifty feet across); and, finally, by overpasses and embankments to the Oak Point Yard of the New Haven Railroad, in the South Bronx. The New Haven, which stood to gain freight and passenger traffic from the Connecting Railroad, agreed

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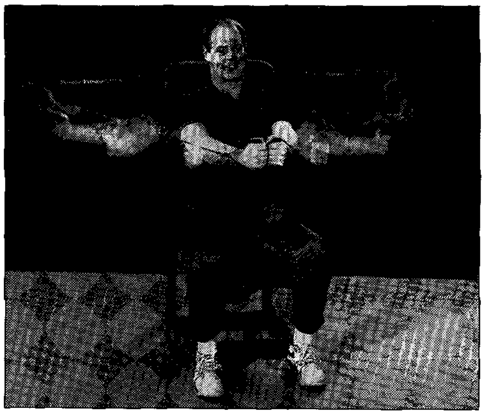

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to share the cost and the ownership of it equally with the Pennsy, and, indeed, to operate it.

The first phase of the extension was completed in 1910. Penn Station, with its vast size and harmonious proportions, was hailed as a masterpiece. Cassatt never saw it. He died of heart disease in 1906. When the station opened, his statue in bronze, larger than life-size, stood in a niche at one side of the grand staircase. In 1910, the Pennsy called itself, without exaggeration, "The Standard Railroad of the World." It had more than ten thousand miles of track, and carried more freight and passengers than any other line. It had 214,632 employees, revenues of $160,457,298, and a net income of $37,775,484. That same year, the federal government, by way of comparison, had 388,708 civilian employees, revenues of $675,512,000, and a virtually invisible deficit of $18,105,000.

The Pennsy's main line ran from New York to Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and then branched off to Chicago and St. Louis. It had scores of other branches and connections with other lines. Its passengers travelled rapidly, dependably, and comfortably, in cars painted a distinctive Tuscan red and adorned with the line's emblem, a keystone bearing an intertwined "PRR" monogram in crimson and gold. By the standards of the times, the Pennsy was efficiently and honestly run. Even as determined a muckraker as Matthew Josephson, the author of "The Robber Barons," finds little to condemn in its operations.

Oddly, there seems to be no reliable figure for the total cost of the extension including the Hell Gate. Estimates put it between a hundred and fifty and a hundred and seventy million. None of the experts I spoke with could think of a privately financed project in the period before the First World War—or the Second, for that matter—that had cost more. Indeed, the higher figure is only a little less than half the amount that the federal government initially spent on building the Panama Canal. Such sums appear to be absurdly small, of course, in terms of current dollars; five or six billion in today's dollars seems like the absolute minimum.

LINDENTHAL, while remaining on the engineering board of the New York Extension, was appointed Commissioner of the Department of Bridges in 1902, in the incoming reform administration of Mayor Seth Low. Low's biographer, Gerald Kurland, says that Lindenthal's appointment had the support of his good friend Herman Ridder, who was the editor of the city's leading German-language newspaper, the *Staats-Zeitung*, and the founder of a newspaper group that is now part of the Knight-Ridder chain.

The commissionership came along at the right time. The Hell Gate was still years from construction, and the outlook for Lindenthal's Hudson River bridge was bleak. The great bridges of the next decade would link Brooklyn and Queens with Manhattan: the Williamsburg was nearing completion when Lindenthal took office, and plans for the Manhattan and Queensboro Bridges had been drawn up. Lindenthal disliked the appearance of the Williamsburg. Addressing the Municipal Arts Society not long after his appointment, he said that its slab-sided towers were "the ugliest possible." When he spoke at its dedication, in 1903, he chose to emphasize its durability rather than its design. "So far as engineering science can foretell with confidence," he stated presciently, "this colossal structure, if protected against corrosion, its only deadly enemy, will stand hundreds of years in unimpaired strength."

Lindenthal believed that bridges should be built with an eye to beauty as well as to utility. His aesthetic preferences tended to be heavily romantic, in the nineteenth-century Hapsburg manner, with gatehouses, colonnades, and heroic statues often standing at the approaches, and decoration applied with a free hand to the towers.

In this spirit, and assisted by Henry F. Hornbostel, a young architect who had studied at Columbia and at the École des Beaux-Arts, Lindenthal began revising the designs he had inherited. For the Manhattan Bridge, he replaced the wire suspension cables with chains of eyebars, hinged the towers at the base to reduce stresses caused by the expansion and contraction of the chains as the temperature rose and fell, and topped the towers with spires. For the Queensboro, which was a cantilever bridge, Lindenthal also prescribed plenty of eyebars. Eyebars are flat girders with enlarged and rounded ends. Each end has a circular opening—hence the name—through which a pin is placed, connecting it to the next eyebar. Lindenthal carried on a lifetime love affair with eyebars; he used them in his Pittsburgh bridges and would have used them in his Hudson River bridge. He maintained that their lateral rigidity more than made up for the fact that they cost more than cable.

Lindenthal and Hornbostel did not see their plans fully realized. New Yorkers tend to admire reformers until they get into office, and so it was with Low. In 1903, when he sought reëlection to what was then a two-year term, he was badly beaten by the Tammany candidate. Lindenthal also lost his job, of course, and his successor vengefully eliminated the eyebars and pivoting towers from the Manhattan Bridge. Carrère & Hastings, the architects of the New York Public Library, replaced Hornbostel, but retained some elements of his design. The Queensboro was built much as Lindenthal and Hornbostel designed it, with its eyebars intact. However, in 1907, the collapse of the Quebec Bridge, which was a cantilever of similar design across the St. Lawrence River, panicked city officials. Without consulting Lindenthal, who was by then working on the Hell Gate, they added thousands of tons of reinforcing girders to the Queensboro, cluttering its graceful outline. They also eliminated two subway tracks that had been planned for it, and so necessitated the digging of a tunnel at Sixtieth Street for the Astoria line.

LINDENTHAL's first choice for the Hell Gate, inevitably, was an eyebar suspension bridge; his second was a cantilever similar to the Queensboro. Both plans had to be discarded when the city ordered the site of the Ward's Island tower to be moved farther from a mental hospital that then occupied the south end of the island. The island was narrower at the new site, and that meant that the three-hundred-foot back spans between the tower and the anchorage which were required by either the suspension or the cantilever design created a curve too sharp for trains to negotiate easily as the line shifted direction to cross the river.

The only other suitable bridge types were the truss and the arch. Lindenthal rejected the truss as lacking aesthetic distinction, and so the Hell Gate was built as an arch. Besides echoing the classicism of Penn Station, the arch possesses the advantage of being the most inherently rigid of bridge types, and therefore the most resistant to repeated flexing, which can eventually cause metal fatigue and failure. The Hell Gate, with two freight and two passenger tracks, had to support heavier moving loads than any bridge built before or since. The Triborough, which looms so showily above it, is anorexic in comparison—built to carry moving loads only a sixth as great.

The most authoritative account of the planning and construction of the Hell Gate is to be found in a paper that was published in 1918 in the *Transactions* of the American Society of Civil Engineers. It was written by Othmar H. Ammann, who was Lindenthal's chief assistant. The paper, which unquestionably reflects Lindenthal's views, received the Rowland Prize that year, and Ammann, a young Swiss engineer, went on to a brilliant career of his own. In the introduction Ammann writes, "A great bridge in a great city, although primarily utilitarian in its purpose, should nevertheless be a work of art to which Science lends its aid. . . . It is only with a broad sense for beauty and harmony, coupled with wide experience in the scientific and technical field, that a monumental bridge can be created. Fortunately, the Hell Gate Bridge was evolved under such conditions, and therefore may well be said to be one of the finest creations of engineering art of great size which this century has produced."

In his search for beauty combined with strength and economy, Lindenthal considered two arch designs. One was a crescent, in which the upper and lower chords met at the abutment; the other was a spandrel, in which the chords remained parallel, the upper being carried to the abutment by vertical girders. Ammann states that the crescent seemed "unnaturally slim" in proportion to its height, and so the spandrel was chosen. Lindenthal, perhaps owing to his Germanic upbringing, tended to prefer massive forms. He believed that a bridge, and particularly a railroad bridge, should not only be strong but look strong. The spandrel would look even stronger and more stable, he decided, if he recurved the upper chord of the arch near its ends, increasing the distance between the upper and the lower chords to a hundred and forty feet. By doing so, he also increased the height of the bridge portals to twenty-four feet, and thus made possible, as Ammann notes, the construction of an upper deck for motor vehicles—a proposal that the Pennsy,

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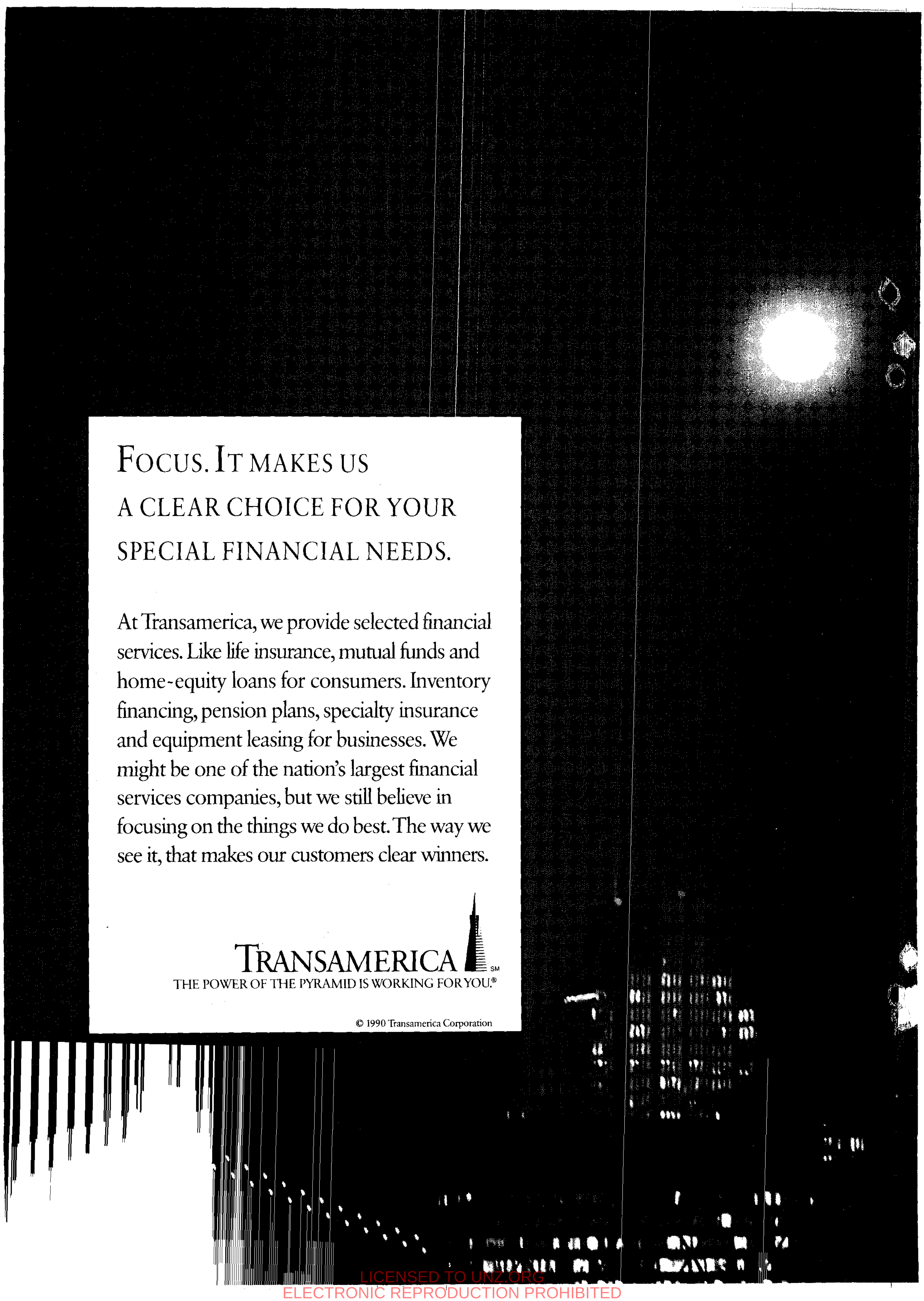

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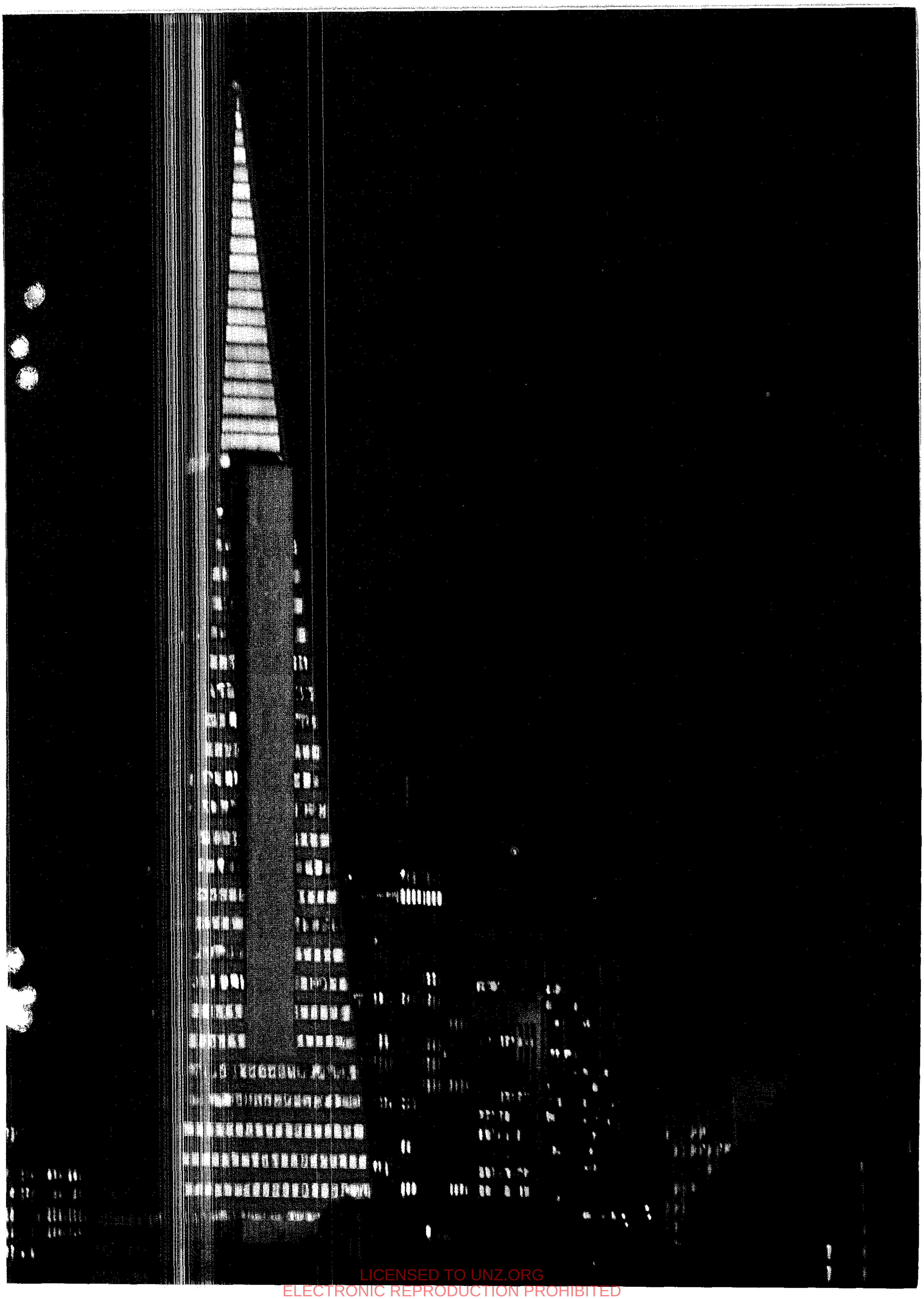


for obvious reasons, vetoed. Lindenthal also extended the transverse girders of the roadbed, which is sixty feet wide, for fifteen feet outside the arch on each side, and made them strong enough to support trolley tracks, in case the need should arise.

Hornbostel was again the consulting architect, and he designed a gracefully ornamented Beaux-Arts platform of masonry and terra-cotta with separate towers of modest height on each side of the roadbed. (It was his last bridge, but he went on to design many distinguished buildings, among them the original campuses of Carnegie Institute of Technology, in Pittsburgh, and Emory University, in Atlanta.) The renderings and elevations were submitted to the Art Commission of the City of New York. Its approval was necessary because Ward’s Island and Randall’s Island were city property. In 1907, the commission, a part-time body composed of generally unheralded architects, artists, and patrons of the arts, rejected the design.

Lindenthal and Hornbostel went back to the drawing board, but not until 1911—only a year before the start of construction—was a revised design submitted and approved. (The beautifully executed drawings for both versions are preserved in the archives of the Art Commission, in its offices, in the attic of City Hall.) The second design retained separate towers, but they were increased in height and were capped by flattened and articulated domes. The decoration of the bases and towers was enriched, and bronze caps, scrolls, and curlicues were applied to the ends of the arch. This does not, of course, describe the appearance of the towers as they were built, and therein lies a mystery. No drawings of the existing towers are to be found in the commission’s archives, nor is there any indication of the approval of the design. It is possible, of course, that these documents may have been lost, but the commission’s minute books, which are unquestionably complete, make no reference to a third design. Of the final version Ammann says only that it was “adopted” shortly before construction began. He states that the massive towers “represent a great improvement . . . being more impressive in outline and simpler in architectural ornament and, therefore, more in harmony with the simple, imposing forms and lines of the bridge proper.”

INVITATION TO THE PAST

Closer, a little closer. There.
The clouded mirror, peeling.
A blue three-legged bureau.
The narrow bed made up afresh by snow.

How much to clear away that room
lit by snow’s soft cold light?
Someone was happy there,
as happy as sad, or not so sad,

but who? The one I remember
as if it were someone else,
who dried her eyes and cried.
Just clear the kitchen table,

snowed under, the newspaper’s white pillow,
the ugly rug where we lay
unmoving in the unmoved air
of a muggy night, spent by love.

A floor below, the oboist rehearsed
the only phrase he seemed to know.
No two alike, flake after frozen flake
skirls down upon his ghost orchestra.

Lightly, crystal on barbed crystal,
the snow of forgetting falls
on already forgotten snow,
a tenderness so selfish

its watery tonnage weighs
against what love I would claim
I felt, finding it wanting,
snow over dust, ash under snow.

—Debora Greger

• •

In the 1911 design Lindenthal also dealt with what he saw as the unsatisfactory state of the recurved upper chord, which ended in midair, as it were, about fifteen feet from the tower. He was aware, of course, that that was the correct engineering solution. The lower chord transmitted virtually all the compressive forces to the abutments; the much lighter upper chord served primarily as a brace for high winds and other lateral forces. Lindenthal feared, however, that the public, supposing that the towers supported the bridge, might think he had forgotten something. To deal with this possible psychological hazard, he grafted stubs of girders to the ends of the upper chords and placed T-shaped forms of concrete within the side openings of the towers. At a distance, they appear to be connected, but in fact a space of about six inches separates them.

Painters are permitted such trompe-l’oeil, but not engineers and architects, and Professor David P. Billington, of Princeton University, criticizes the design in his book “The Tower and the Bridge.” He describes Lindenthal as “a major figure” and acknowledges that the Hell Gate has “aesthetic power,” but he finds Lindenthal guilty of an anachronistic “aesthetic of mass,” in which masonry is used to achieve monumental effects in a steel structure. The towers were unnecessary, he says, because the weight of the bases and their foundations was sufficient, or ought to have been, to contain the compressive force of the arch. All that was required above them was girders of sufficient strength to support the roadbed.

On the other hand, Professor Carl W. Condit, in his book “American Building Art: The Twentieth Century,” states that the Connecting Railroad includes “probably the most remarkable succession of contiguous bridges in the world." He calls the Hell Gate the country's greatest arch bridge and praises its "magnificent appearance." He goes on, "The slender arch rib, with its massive but simply articulated stiffening truss, is the very expression of combined stability and energy; its enormous thrust is perfectly contained, in a visual sense, by the heavy masonry towers."

Robert A. M. Stern, Gregory Gilmartin, and John Massengale, in their book "New York 1900: Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism 1890-1915," second the motion. They hail the bridge as "Lindenthal's and Hornbostel's masterpiece," and say, "The gentle reverse curve in the top chord was particularly graceful in its expression of the transfer of forces to the masonry abutments and gave the bridge an uncommonly elegant silhouette against the sky."

In another design change, the viaduct piers were built of reinforced concrete rather than crisscrossed steel girders. Ammann wrote that that change had been made to avoid the need for frequent painting. However, in the course of the discussion of the paper by members of the society, Lindenthal let the cat out of the bag. He said that city officials had objected to the steel girders out of fear that the inmates of the mental hospital on Ward's Island and of the reformatory on Randall's Island would easily climb them and escape across the viaduct. In any case, the concrete piers are a great improvement. Their height, rising to more than a hundred feet, is emphasized by their high arch, their slenderness, and their sleek buttressing. The cornices and the coping are elaborately articulated. Even the concrete, a golden tan, with the glint of quartz pebbles in its slightly roughened surface, is unusually attractive.

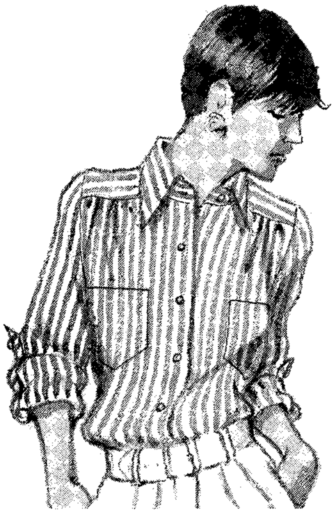
THE usual technique in building an arch bridge is to support each end on heavy scaffolding, called falsework, until the sections are joined at the center and become mutually supporting. However, falsework would have blocked traffic on the busy river, and so Lindenthal adopted a method that James Buchanan Eads had used on a far smaller scale in the eighteen-seventies, in building the bridge that bears his name across the Mississippi at St. Louis. Lindenthal erected the bases of the towers to track level. On each of these were built two temporary towers, using girders that would not be needed until the final stages of construction.

From the top of each of the towers, strings of girders were bolted together and extended diagonally downward on the river and the land sides. One pair was attached to the arch at the farthest point at which it was self-sustaining, about two hundred feet from the base. The other pair, the backstays, was fastened to a temporary platform on the ground four hundred and fifty feet behind the tower. Over seven thousand tons of steel and earth was placed on each platform, counterbalancing the pull of the arch as the ends were extended outward. A traveller crane mounted on each end of the arch hoisted girders into place from barges in the river.

The lower chord of the arch had to sustain a compressive force of a hundred and fifty thousand tons—an enormous figure, requiring the heaviest girders ever fabricated. These were rectangular boxes ten and a half feet long and six and a half feet wide and ranging in depth from seven feet, at the crown of the arch, to almost eleven feet, at the abutments. All four sides of the box and a vertical stiffening diaphragm at the center were, in Ammann's words, "of the extraordinary thickness of 2 in." Four of these box girders were riveted together to form each of the twenty-three construction members, all of which were forty-two and a half feet long, in the ribs of the lower chord.

To compensate for expansion and contraction, Lindenthal, following standard practice, "hinged" both ribs of the lower chord. The ends of the ribs rested against pyramidal cast-steel bearings, each weighing two hundred and forty-five tons, that were fastened to the sloping abutment at the base of each tower. The outer ends of the bearings were slightly convex, and so allowed the ends of the arch ribs to roll upward as the steel expanded. That movement, in turn, permitted the entire arch to bow upward by as much as six inches as it baked under the summer sun.

As the arch neared completion, the big question, as it always is about any structure built from two sides, was whether the ends would meet. In October of 1915, on a day when the temperature at noon was sixty degrees, the figure that Lindenthal had used in his calculations, hydraulic jacks of three



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thousand tons' capacity, the largest ever built, which had been installed at the tops of the temporary towers, lowered both halves of the arch about twenty-two inches. The ends met with an easily adjusted deviation of five-sixteenths of an inch.

After the arch was closed, the remaining work proceeded rapidly. The bridge over Little Hell Gate was a graceful design of four inverted bowstring trusses, in which Lindenthal got a chance to use eyebars. The Bronx Kill bridge was a bascule, with leaves that pivoted upward at the shore ends. The advantage of this design is that if a train started across the bridge while it was open it would hit the raised leaf instead of going into the drink. However, the leaves were never raised, and, in fact, the machinery to raise them was never installed, because the Corps of Engineers' plan to dredge the kills to make them navigable was never carried out. Trains began using the Hell Gate on April 3, 1917. On April 6th, the United States declared war on the Central Powers. The bridge immediately simplified the movement of soldiers and freight along the seaboard.

AMMANN says that the Hell Gate, the other bridges, and the viaducts were built by an average daily work force of a hundred and forty "specially picked men," which was increased from time to time to as many as two hundred and seventy. "Unusual precautions were taken for the safety of the workmen," he continues. "Only 5 men lost their lives, mostly due to their own carelessness. Hand ropes and temporary wooden railings were provided on many members, and special steel cages with comfortable platforms were hung from the travelers or from the steelwork for the convenience of the men working on the truss connections."

When I spoke with Peter Nicastro, he was certainly one of the last of the men who had worked on the Hell Gate who were still living. He was a hale ninety years old, a widower for five years, living alone in a mobile home in Ormond Beach, Florida. I was put in touch with him by Stanley Cogan, the president of the Queens Historical Society, to whom he is related by marriage. Having thought that Ammann had betrayed a certain offhandedness, I began by asking Nicastro if the fatal accidents on the bridge had really been the fault of the men involved.

"Oh, sure," he replied, to my surprise. "We used to take terrible chances. I remember one guy, he was trying to jump from one girder to another while he was carrying a keg of bolts on each shoulder. He missed, and *splat!* Did you say he said only five? I thought it was more than that—seven or eight while I was working on it—but I wouldn't swear to it. One of the bosses would blow his whistle when someone went overboard, and we'd knock off for the rest of the day. That was O.K. with us, but we didn't get paid. We'd take up a collection, but we never went to the funeral. When I heard the whistle to quit work, I couldn't be bothered waiting for the box"—the construction elevator. "I'd slide down the girders to the ground. Then I'd go home to change my clothes and go out and have a few beers. I'd go to Bohemian Hall or Schutzen Hall or a place we called the Bucket of Blood. If no bodies were being thrown out the door, it was O.K. to go in."

Nicastro went on to tell me, "The bridge wasn't so bad. I even enjoyed it. There were a lot of Indians working on the bridge. They always worked together, in the same gangs. They really knew what they were doing. I must have had Indian blood. I was never afraid of heights—not even the first time I went up. We stood on these little platforms—you know, scaffolds—with a rope railing. That was all that was between us and the river. A lot of people, when they nearly fell off, they got that fear, and they couldn't work anymore. I had some close calls, but I never had a bad accident. Sometimes I'd dream about it at night, but I'd be back the next day."

The enthusiasm and strength of youth still echoed in Nicastro's voice. He spoke with a fine old New York accent, in which "joint" comes out "jernt" and "learn" is "loin," and with the city's characteristic rapidity, emphasis, and volume, in a voice pitched a bit above middle C but roughened and thinned by smoking, hard labor, and great age. There were times when he had to pause to search back seventy years and more in the labyrinth of memory, but when he had found his way he spoke vividly and concisely.

"I left school when I was fourteen," Nicastro said. "I couldn't be bothered with school. I got a job cleaning furnaces at the Consolidated Gasworks on

Berrian's Island, where Con Edison is now. My mother—I was her pet of the thirteen kids—didn't like me working there. She said it was a dirty job. It was dirty, all right! We lived only about half a mile from where they were building the bridge, and one day I met some of the ironworkers. They said they could get me a job. I wanted to know how much it paid. They said, 'Five and a half dollars a day.' That was big money then. I was making, I think, two and a half or three dollars at the gasworks. So I went down there, and I got taken on as a bucker-up on a riveting gang. We worked from 7:30 A.M. to 4 P.M. On Saturdays, we quit at noon. That's when you got paid. You went over to the office and you'd get your money in a little brown envelope. In those days, you got everything you earned; there weren't any deductions, like they had later on."

After a pause, Nicastro said, "They put me in a gang with guys from down South. They were all right. They showed me what to do. I learned on the job, you could say. The Southern guys worked all over the country, but a lot of them married girls they met while they were working on the bridge and stayed in the neighborhood. I'd see them around for years. There was five men in a riveting gang. There was the heater. He had a little forge, and he'd heat the rivets until they were red hot. Then his helper would take the rivet in a pair of tongs and toss it to the riveter's helper. He'd catch it in a bucket. Those guys never missed. I was the bucker-up. I had this tool with a cup-shaped place in it that I'd fit over the head of the rivet. I held it in place in the hole—just pushing against it—while the riveter formed the second head on the other side of the girder with a pneumatic hammer. The rivet contracted when it cooled down, and that made it good and tight. The inspectors would test all the rivets by hitting them with a hammer. If a rivet didn't sound right, you'd have to cut it out and do it over.

"I wanted to be a riveter, but they said I wasn't big enough. I was about five feet six, but I weighed only about a hundred and ten pounds in those days. Now I weigh about a hundred and thirty-five. I'm getting fat, I guess, but I've still got my hair, but it's all white, and mostly my own teeth. I can still hear pretty good, and I started having to wear glasses only a few years ago."

The riveting gangs on the Hell Gate

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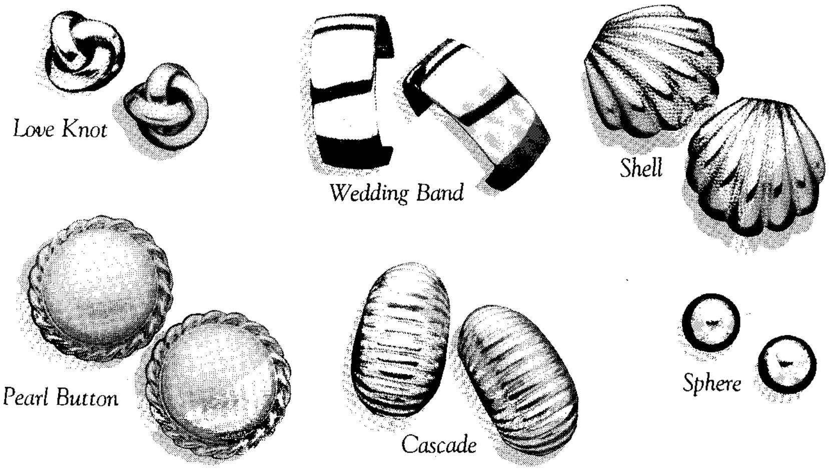

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drove a total of three hundred and thirty-four thousand rivets. Two-thirds of them were ten inches long and an inch and a quarter in diameter, which is very large as rivets go. There hasn't been any structural riveting for twenty-five years or more. The machine-gun clatter of the rivet gun has been replaced by the welder's torch and power wrenches that fasten nuts on high-strength steel bolts. Bolting and welding aren't necessarily better than riveting, but they are much cheaper.

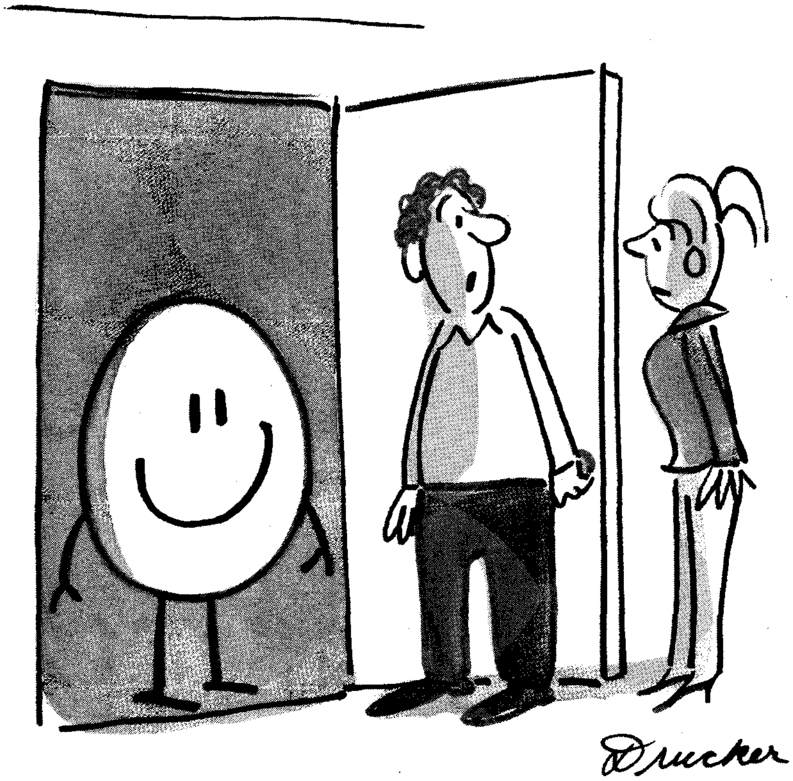
Another pause, and then Nicastro said, "It's funny. When I was a kid working on the bridge, I didn't think nothing of it. Nobody did. It was just another job. Now when I tell people, even down here in Florida, that I worked on the Hell Gate they say 'Oh, you did?' like it was really something special."

In April of 1989, not long after his conversations with me, Pete Nicastro died of a heart attack. "He was in great shape right up to the end," his son, Russell, told me. "He didn't even have to take any medicine. Just an aspirin tablet every day. Not bad for a man who was gassed in the First World War, and had only one good lung."

AFTER the bankruptcy of the Penn Central, the archives of the Pennsy and the New Haven were locked away in warehouses. (Most of the New York Central's old records were destroyed during its last years.) Under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Hagley Museum and Library, in Greenville, Delaware, outside Wilmington, recently completed cataloguing a portion of the Pennsy's archives. The remainder of the cataloguing has been divided among seven other institutions, including the New York Public Library. The University of Connecticut has received a grant to catalogue the New Haven's records.

The Hagley's holdings, I learned, included several boxes of records pertaining to the Connecting Railroad. As it turned out, they contained no startling revelations but added a human dimension. In September of 1912, for example, Lindenthal, in a letter to Rea, said that he had been stung on the purchase of a launch that was to be used to ferry workers back and forth across the river. The engine had proved to be unreliable, but the manufacturer, the Michigan Steel Boat Company, having received payment in advance from the gullible chief engineer, declined to put matters right. Lindenthal wrote that under the circumstances he "would greatly appreciate the loan of such a light harbormaster's boat if it can be had."

The Pennsy apparently could not oblige, because in January of 1913 Lindenthal was again writing to Rea about the maritime situation. "I have since been hiring boats, but this had to be given up as unreliable," he stated. "There is an opportunity now for the purchase of a boat for $650 large enough to carry 20 persons and just suited for the work of the company." An assistant of Rea's approved the purchase, but, apparently mindful of the Michigan Steel Boat Company fiasco, suggested that the craft be examined by experts before any money changed hands.



"Oh-oh! Look who's back!"

The files contained no information on the five fatally injured workmen, but I came across a list of about a hundred men who had been treated for injuries received on the job from September of 1912 through June of 1914. Perhaps half had received cash compensation, and the amounts, which were paid voluntarily, struck me as not ungenerous. Adolph Johnson received two hundred dollars, which worked out to almost six weeks' pay if he was a steelworker, for a fractured arm; Hans Narless got [illegible] hundred and twenty-five dollars for "a bad strain"; Charles Klein accepted—foolishly, in view of the size of some of the other settlements—a mere twenty dollars for a broken nose and cheekbone; Benjamin Larsen made no claim at all for a crushed toe, and got exactly what he had asked for; Charles Ikler, apparently dissatisfied with the offer he received, was suing over a broken hip; Mike Bill hit the jackpot, getting eight hundred and fifty dollars for a crushed heel, an award that suggests that the company's physicians must have known he would never walk without a limp or know a day free of pain.

The files contained a series of letters in which Lindenthal tried to persuade Rea that his fee should be increased. The great engineer, who could estimate the cost of a mighty project like the Hell Gate down to the last dollar, was obliged to admit to Rea in April of 1912 that "the cost of my work is mounting up more than I expected," and to ask for a "just and reasonable" increase in his compensation, without giving a figure. He named bridges for which engineers had received more money for less work. "There is no bridge viaduct anywhere in the world, which in three miles length requires as many different designs of steel and concrete bridge work as this N.Y. Connecting R.R.," he wrote. "A Mississippi River Bridge is very simple by comparison." He concluded, "As regards next payment of account—I very much need $25,000, to repay what I borrowed partly from a friend and partly from my bank."

Although Rea was an old friend, he apparently did not hasten to meet Lindenthal's request. In December of 1914, Lindenthal got down to particulars. He asked that his total fee be increased from five hundred thousand dollars to six hundred and thirty thousand. He pointed out that the project had taken a large part of his time since 1904, and that he was paying the salaries of between seventy and ninety men, as well as meeting heavy expenses and overhead. In January of 1915, after a certain amount of back-and-forthing, Lindenthal got his money.

Some time after I had looked at the Hagley files, the New York Public Library began to receive its share of the Pennsy archives. I received permission to examine the minute books of the board of directors of the New York Connecting Railroad. These leather-bound volumes of typewritten summaries did not contain, as I had imagined, accounts of intrigues, threats made and received, disagreements, and the like. They dealt, pretty much pro forma, with bond issues, which were sold in equal shares by J. P. Morgan & Co. and Goldman Sachs, and with the approval of major purchases. The directors bravely wrote off hundreds of dollars in unpaid rents, usually in amounts of five or ten dollars a month, on dwellings that stood in the right of way but had not yet been demolished. There were long lists of the names and addresses of deadbeats, with notations like "No money," "Can't pay," or "Gone."

WHILE Lindenthal was working on the Hell Gate, he was also designing and supervising the construction of another colossal railroad bridge—a fifteen-hundred-and-fifty-foot double-track span across the Ohio River at Sciotoville, about ninety miles south of Columbus, which was to carry the enormously heavy coal trains—moving loads of two hundred thousand tons and more—of the Chesapeake & Ohio.

In the early twenties, Lindenthal, again assisted by Ammann, designed three bridges over the Willamette River in Portland, Oregon: the Burnside, a truss with a bascule-lift center span; the Sellwood, a deck truss; and the Ross Island, a cantilever. They had to support nothing heavier than motor vehicles and, in one case, trolley cars, and were as graceful as the Hell Gate and Sciotoville were massive. All three were completed in 1925 and 1926, and turned out to be Lindenthal's last important works.

Also in the early nineteen-twenties, Lindenthal was once again promoting his Hudson River bridge. His eminence was such that he and it were the subject of articles in several magazines. A photograph of Lindenthal that accompanied the article in *Collier's* showed a handsome man with strong features, a full head of white hair parted in the middle, a bushy mustache, and a full beard. His expression was thoughtful, and his eyes seemed fixed on distant horizons. The design of the bridge, which was shown in a drawing, was much the same as the eighteen-nineties version: there were splayed towers, clad in masonry, two pairs of eyebar suspension chains, and two decks. "The bridge will shortly be a fact," Lindenthal stated in *Collier's*, but he was

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wrong, and his inability to consider an alternative to what had become an obsession not only darkened his later years but also ended his association with Ammann. In a speech in 1955, Ammann recalled that he had tried to persuade Lindenthal to design a vehicular bridge across the Hudson at 179th Street. "He could not be weaned away from his own grandiose project, however," Ammann said, "and I proceeded to plan and advocate actively what eventually became the George Washington Bridge."

Edward Cohen, the managing partner of Ammann & Whitney, an engineering firm that Ammann and Charles Whitney, who had been a young engineer on the Hell Gate, founded in 1946, told me of an illuminating entry in Ammann's diary in March of 1923. Ammann wrote that after he presented his arguments for the bridge Lindenthal "rebuked me severely for my 'timidity and shortsightedness' in not looking far enough ahead," and "stated that he was looking ahead for 1,000 years." In fact, it was Lindenthal, who was almost thirty years older than Ammann, who had become shortsighted. Before the end of that year, they parted.

"Lindenthal and Ammann made a curious and effective combination," Cohen wrote in a memoir published in 1967, two years after Ammann's death. "Lindenthal . . . was a mercurial, impulsive genius, full of Wagnerian ambitions and vainglorious dreams. Ammann was the quiet Swiss burgher, tactful and courteous in his relationships, calm in judgments, flawless in his engineering and an able executive. A comparison of their talents in design would be fruitless; it is enough that both stand with Roebling, builder of the Brooklyn Bridge, as deathless masters of their craft."

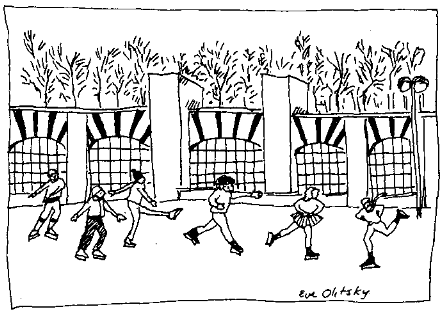
In 1924, Ammann took his plan for a Hudson River vehicular bridge to the Port of New York Authority, now the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. It was enthusiastic enough to hire him as its chief engineer. Ground was broken in 1927, and the George Washington Bridge was completed in 1931, eight months ahead of schedule. Ammann had appointed Lindenthal as a design consultant—a gracious gesture, under the circumstances—and they rode to the dedication together in an open car.

By the time the George Washington opened, Lindenthal was past eighty. He still visited his office every day, but there wasn't much for him to do. In 1932, the press took note of his justified complaint that the siting of the Triborough Bridge, which was also being designed by Ammann, would destroy the dramatic setting of the Hell Gate. In 1934, he fell ill, and in 1935, at the age of eighty-five, he died.

AMTRAK has always lost large sums of money, and almost certainly will never make them. However, it has been making progress in cutting its operating deficit, which the government makes up—from seven hundred and thirty-five million dollars in 1982 to four hundred and seventy-five million dollars this year. Indeed, W. Graham Claytor, Jr., who has been its president and chairman since 1982, said recently that Amtrak might well break even by the year 2000—if the government had provided a total of three billion dollars for capital expenditures by then. Claytor said that continued financial gains would depend, as they had in the past, on new and more efficient equipment—from locomotives to computers—and a continuing decrease in labor costs.

Union featherbedding, or make-work, has been reduced and in time will be eliminated; for instance, firemen, who have been redundant since the end of the age of steam, are finally being phased out, and engineers work a forty-hour week instead of getting a day's pay for every hundred miles their trains cover. This arrangement, dating back a century, made it possible for an engineer on the high-speed Northeast Corridor run to make a month's pay—thirty-five hundred dollars or so—in seven working days, and to make, with overtime (if that is the word), sixty thousand dollars a year.

Claytor is unapologetic about Amtrak's subsidy. "All transportation is subsidized one way or the other," he told me not long ago. "The annual appropriation for the Federal Aviation Administration alone, which benefits the airline industry almost entirely, is more than the entire Amtrak subsidy. You've also got to remember that airports are built with tax-free bonds. And there's a lot more. Buses travel on interstate highways that were built with federal grants, and so on. We figure that the federal subsidy for airline passengers works out to thirty-two dollars a ticket. Our problem is that our subsidy is right out there on the top [illegible] the table, where everyone can see it, and the others are under it."



Claytor was seated in his office, overlooking the restored granite-and-marble glory of Washington's Union Station. (He has since moved to an office there, as has most of his staff.) It, too, is a memorial to Cassatt's years as the head of the Pennsy, and barely escaped the wrecker's ball that demolished Penn Station, in part because of the widespread revulsion over that act of legal vandalism. Claytor, who is seventy-eight years old, headed the Southern Railway for ten years, spent more than thirty years as a high-powered Washington lawyer, and served as Secretary of the Navy, Acting Secretary of Transportation, and Deputy Secretary of Defense in the Carter Administration.

Given the breadth of his experience, the weight of his responsibilities, and what I took to be the flintiness of his personality, I was not surprised to hear a note of impatience in his voice when I mentioned that none of his subordinates seemed to know when the Hell Gate had last been painted. "Hell, that bridge was built so strong it will last forever," he growled.

Returning to New York, by train, of course, I found myself wondering whether it was just a lack of money that kept Amtrak from fixing up the Hell Gate. (I discounted, of course, Claytor's persiflage about its design strength. New York City, after all, was learning to its cost that any bridge requires maintenance.) The long and short of it was that the Hell Gate was a stepchild. Conrail and Amtrak had had a custody fight over it. Amtrak had lost, the government having decided that it was the primary user, and had been forced to take ownership.

At the time of my conversation with Claytor, I knew only that it had been a long time since the Hell Gate had been painted. A few months later, while crossing the bridge in the cab of the locomotive of Amtrak's Yankee Clipper, I thought to ask the engineer, a ruddy, white-haired veteran of the old New Haven named John Joseph Donovan, who has since retired. He said that he thought it had been in 1956, when a wheeler-dealer named Patrick McGinnis was running the failing line.

"One summer, he hired a bunch of college kids, and they spent a couple of months slapping on paint," he said. "They didn't do any sandblasting or priming. As a job, it wasn't worth a damn. Most of it washed off in a year or two. I don't know why he bothered."

James Bishop, the secretary-treasurer of District Council No. 9 of the International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades and a past president of Local 806 of the Structural Steel and Bridge Painters Union, who has since died, helped to provide the definitive answer.

"It's been fifty or sixty years, anyhow," he said. "I'm not sure of the date, but I know it was before the Second World War. The guy who can tell you is Joe Sharkey, who's also a past president of the local. He worked on the job when he was a kid. He's retired down in South Carolina with a bad heart. Whatever it is, it's been too long. Any steel bridge, especially when you're talking about one over salt water, should be painted every eight years at least."

I reached Sharkey in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. "I know exactly when it was," he said. "We painted it during the good-weather months of 1938 and 1939. I was just out of high school. There were forty of us in the crew. I got thirty dollars or thirty-three dollars, I'm not sure which, for a sixty-hour week. That wasn't bad money then for a kid."

After the bankruptcy of the Penn Central, the Pennsy's library and memorabilia were sold at auction. One of the major buyers was the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, at Strasburg, near Lancaster. Among the acquisitions I was shown by the director, Robert Emerson, were the portraits of the presidents of the Pennsy. All but one were the work of respectable but unheralded local limners. The exception, as might have been guessed, was Cassatt's, which was executed by John Singer Sargent, the greatest American portraitist of the period.

Cassatt wears a black cravat and an open frock coat over a vest crossed by a heavy gold watch chain and fob. He stands very straight, with his hands in the pockets of his trousers. Sargent's Cassatt is a handsome man with graying hair, a high forehead, blue-gray eyes, and a ruddy complexion. Judging by photographs, Sargent caught an excellent, if not unflattering, likeness, and endowed it with the breath of life and emotional truth, expressed in the arrogant tilt of Cassatt's head and the piercing gaze of his eyes.

"There's something else I want to show you," Emerson said. We passed displays of old posters and timetables, tools, uniforms, and nameplates, and entered a hangarlike building in which some twenty locomotives, tenders, coaches, private cars, and other rolling stock are displayed. In a dark corner lay a slatted crate. Emerson turned on a work light. Kneeling, I could see that it contained a statue of a man, about twice life-size, face upward, rigid, ghastly green.

"This is the statue of Cassatt that stood in Penn Station," Emerson said. "When the station was demolished, it was dumped in a landfill in Secaucus, New Jersey. Someone rescued it and we agreed to take it. Now we're trying to figure out where to put it."

THE doorways at the base of the towers of the Hell Gate were bricked up long ago to deter trespassers. The closest point of access is half a mile away, at Forty-fourth Street in Astoria. There, on a quiet summer Saturday, I opened a gate in the tilting cyclone fence and climbed a rickety wooden stairway that rose against the side of the embankment to the tracks.

The broad right-of-way stretched before me, rising to the tower. The ballast—irregularly broken rock about the size of golf balls—stirred and crunched and slid beneath my feet as I walked. The odor of creosote rose from the ties. Gnarled shrubs with thick, jointed stems and small pale-green leaves, veined and tipped blood-red, drawing nourishment from rocks, rust, and oil, thrust themselves up between the tracks and along the sides of the viaduct. Overhead, the cables of the electric-power system, the disk-shaped ceramic insulators, and the latticed towers supporting them, etched delicate abstractions against an overcast silver-gray sky. Street sounds were muffled. A

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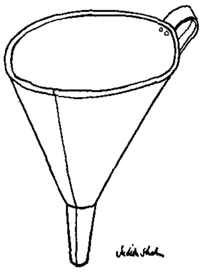
breeze from the river wavered and fell in the heavy air.

As I stepped into the portal of the tower, I decided to investigate an open doorway. The beam of my flashlight revealed an iron staircase that spiralled tightly upward through a circular shaft. I ascended thirty feet or so, and emerged into a vast vaulted chamber about forty feet high. Decorative slits admitted a crepuscular light. I became aware of an acrid odor and an insistent throbbing sound. As my eyes became accustomed to the gloom, I saw pigeons perched on beams and ledges in the shadows. The concrete floor, I realized, felt oddly soft underfoot. I saw that it was carpeted with feathers and droppings. Here and there lay dead pigeons, turning to dust. Perhaps this was the safe place where pigeons came to die. I crossed the chamber, ascended a second stairway, pushed open a door, and stepped out onto the roof of the tower. Before me rose the mighty arch, flexed in perpetual tension. Below lay the broad tree-lined lawns of Astoria Park. Beyond was the willowy Triborough Bridge, the confluence of the East and Harlem Rivers—neither of which, of course, is really a river—Lindenthal's Queensboro, and the towers of midtown Manhattan. It struck me that not one of those buildings—at least the ones I could see—was as old as the Hell Gate.

When I returned to the track level and began to walk toward the center of the bridge, I had the sensation of being gripped and held in a gigantic cage. The box girders of the arch were as wide as the span of my arms, and so big that they contained hatches for internal inspection. The suspension girders, six feet wide and about a foot thick, extended downward from the arch to the transverse floor beams beneath the tracks. Overhead, the N-braces between the upper and lower chords of the arch, and the two tiers of horizontal X-braces that connected the two upper and the two lower chords, formed dizzying patterns that kept changing as I walked along. The paint had flaked away to mere patches of black coating and grayish primer. The dominant colors were shades of rust—yellowish, reddish, chocolate, and black-brown.



To the north, a silver Amtrak train rose on the viaduct from the Bronx. As the engine raced past me, its pantograph—the diamond-shaped device that transmits power from the overhead line—jiggled and hissed. The cars came by with a rush of heavy air that blended pleasantly with the sound of their wheels against the rails. It was an accented *shhh*, *shhh*, *shhh*, like a snare drum being played with wire brushes.

IN the New York Public Library I found a slender volume, entitled "Gustav Lindenthal als Mensch und Techniker" ("as Man and Engineer"), by Dr. Otto F. Theimer, which was published in Brünn, as the city is called on the title page, in 1930, to mark Lindenthal's eightieth birthday. Because of its poor condition, I had to wait several months, until it had been microfilmed, to make a photocopy. I took it to Goethe House, the German cultural institution, and there Ingeborg von Zitzewitz, a member of the staff, translated it for me. After skimming the text, of about five thousand words, she said that although Lindenthal's childhood, his career, and his honorary degrees were discussed in detail, there was no reference to his having attended the Brünn or Vienna institutes. It was, she said, an unthinkable omission in a celebratory volume.

"Theimer writes that Lindenthal's father was 'a respected *Tischlermeister*,' or cabinetmaker, and that Gustav got 'a thorough school education,' " she said. "In those days, that would have meant to the age of fourteen or so. He goes on to say that Gustav was put to work as a mason and carpenter, and that he also worked in a machine shop. Then Theimer writes, 'As the oldest son of a family with many children, the home soon became too confining for him. It was perhaps because of a sense of obligation to make room for his younger siblings that he, a mere twenty years of age, secretly went to Vienna to start a life of his own.' That doesn't sound very much like an engineering student to me."

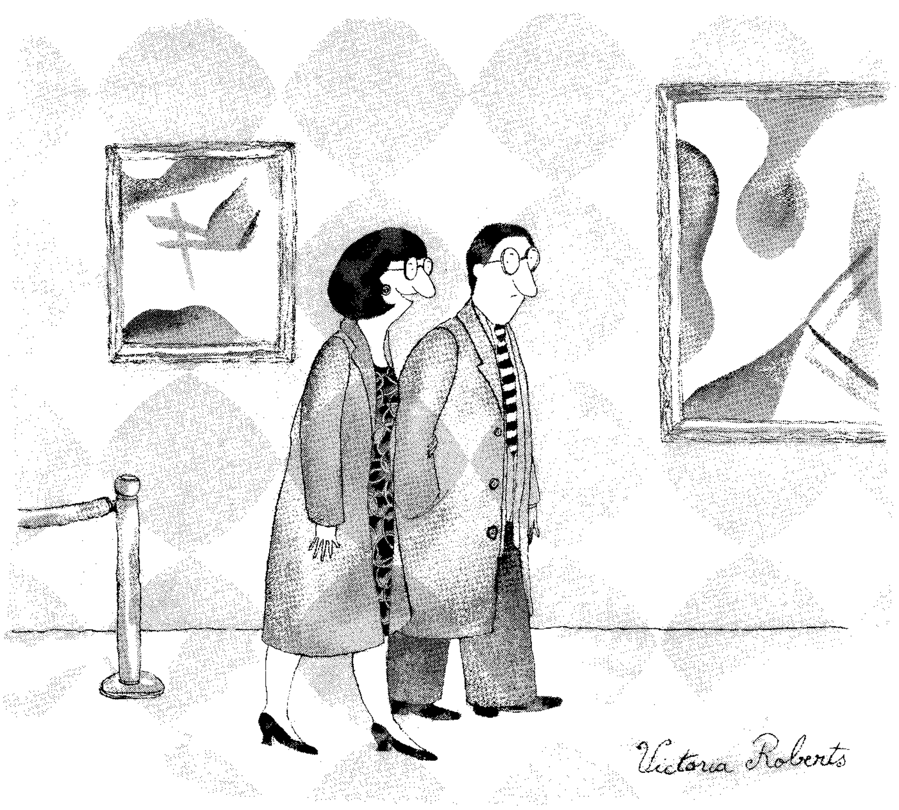
I asked Miss von Zitzewitz to send letters of inquiry to the two institutes. She called a couple of weeks later to say that she had received a reply from Dr. Alfred Lechner, the archivist of the Technische Universität, as the institute in Vienna is now known. He said that neither its records nor those of the polytechnic in Brünn, to which he had access, mentioned anyone named Gustav Lindenthal as a student during the eighteen-sixties or early seventies. Under the circumstances, Lechner said, it had to be assumed that Lindenthal was "*autodidaktisch*," or self-taught. He mentioned in passing that an Ernst Lindenthal had been a student at Brünn in the eighteen-seventies, and wondered if he and Gustav might have been related.

Thus, it appeared that the most eminent bridge designer of his time had been, in a sense, an impostor. Lindenthal was neither the first immigrant to these shores nor the last to invent or to embellish his accomplishments or his ancestry—some did it to erase a criminal past, to free themselves from unhappy marriages, or simply to create new, more agreeable, and, perhaps, truer versions of themselves. His ersatz degrees doubtless opened doors, but he would have been quickly booted back onto the street if he had not been able to do the work. What his deception concealed, in fact, was the extraordinary intelligence, energy, and self-discipline that enabled him to teach himself mathematics, engineering theory, metallurgy, hydraulics, estimating, management, and everything else a successful bridge designer had to know—not to mention, in his case, English. The United States was indeed a country of self-made men in those days, and no man was more self-made than he.

Not long afterward, I received a call from Sheila Brand, of the American Society of Civil Engineers, who knew of my interest in Lindenthal. She told me that, by coincidence, she had recently received a letter from a Volkmar Lindenthal, in Adelaide, Australia. He described himself as a great-nephew of Gustav, she said, and was seeking information about him. She gave me Volkmar's telephone number, and I reached him soon afterward.

"I had been hearing about Uncle Gustav all my life, but I never met him, and I realized that I really didn't know very much about all the work he did in the United States," Volkmar said after I had introduced myself. "When you turn sixty, as I just did, you begin to think about things like that."

I mentioned my investigation of Gustav's academic background, and asked if the Ernst Lindenthal men-



"This is our first recession together."

tioned by Lechner was a member of the family.

"Oh, yes," Volkmar replied. "He was my grandfather—a younger brother of Gustav's. He became a teacher of mathematics in Trieste and Vienna, and then back in Brünn. I suppose that by the time he was ready to go to the technical school his father could afford to send him."

Volkmar, who said he had emigrated to Australia in 1950 and had established a successful construction business, went on to say that Gustav's daughter and only child, Franziska, was alive and well. "In fact, I saw her a couple of years ago, and she looked wonderful," he said. "She lives in Germany, outside Stuttgart, with her second husband."

Volkmar gave me her telephone number. After getting no answer over the next several days, I called Volkmar again to ask if he could help me find her sons. A few days later, he reported that one of them, Peter Renz, lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts. When I reached him, he said that his mother and her husband, Wolfgang Gebhardt, a retired automotive engineer, had been in Hawaii and would be stopping in Cambridge for a few days on their way back to Germany. He said he would arrange a meeting.

The slender, erect woman who greeted me at the door of a pleasant frame house on Chestnut Street not long afterward more than justified Volkmar's description. Renz had told me that his mother was seventy-four, but she had glowing, scarcely lined skin, clear eyes, and a bright smile. In the course of our introductions, she mentioned that she preferred to spell her first name Francesca.

After we seated ourselves in the living room, in which several drawings and renderings of her father's works were hung, I brought up vague references in Theimer's volume to "*bittere Erlebnisse*," or bitter events, that led Lindenthal to leave Philadelphia for Pittsburgh, and "*ein schwerer Schicksalsschlag*," or a heavy blow of fate, that played a part in his departure from Pittsburgh.

"Those were marriages that didn't work out," she said good-naturedly. "He often said that he was very naïve when he arrived here. The first marriage was a great disaster, and it ended in a rather messy court case. In both cases, I think, he decided that the women were more interested in his money than they were in him. He married again in 1902, but that wife died after only three years. My mother, who was born Carrie Herndon, was actually his fourth wife. She was a quiet Southern lady, who ran the household and raised me while he did his work. But he was sixty when they were married, and she was only about half his age. After my father's death, she sometimes spoke to me about her marriage, and I got the idea that she felt she had missed something in life."

Mrs. Gebhardt looked not very pleased, as was natural, when I brought up the question of her father's education. She said she could not recall that the subject had ever come up, but she had always assumed that the listings in reference works were correct. In any event, she said, there could be no question about his honorary degrees and other awards.

"My father stood a little over six feet tall and was solidly built," she replied when I asked her to describe him. "He wore a mustache and a beard from the time he was a young man. They turned white at an early age, I was told, but aside from that he was very youthful-looking. Perhaps I take after him. He was strict with me, as parents were in those days, but he had a great sense of humor. He was very fond of Viennese food, and we had an Austrian cook who made wonderful schnitzels and apple strudel by the yard. He liked good wine, but it was served only on Sundays or when we had guests—as we often did. On Sunday, he would also allow himself one cigar after dinner. His dinner-table conversation was very interesting. He particularly liked to talk about ancient history and architecture. He never lost his Austrian accent, which is softer and more lilting than a German accent. He spoke excellent English, slowly and precisely.

"My father bought the house in Metuchen, New Jersey, I grew up in—and where he died—in 1902 or 1903. It was a big house, with a porte cochère and a long veranda. He named it the Lindens after he bought it, because he had planted several linden trees on the grounds. The property also included a two-hundred-and-thirty-acre farm, which was operated by a tenant. I loved being around the cows and horses. My father's great relaxation was walking around the farm. He said that he would figure out engineering problems while he walked.

"Herman Ridder"—the publisher—"was his *closest* friend. He would have

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been my godfather, but he died shortly before I was baptized. He and my father were members of the Liederkranz, the city's most prominent German-American club. My father was also the president of the Austrian-American Society. Samuel Rea came occasionally to our house, but I was too young to have any clear recollection of him. He had been a great supporter of my father since the days when they were both in Pittsburgh, and he believed in the Hudson River bridge until the day he died."

She was married, she said, in 1936, the year after her father's death, to Hans Renz, an engineer. They lived in Stockholm, where he represented the Carrier Corporation. During the Second World War, Renz, who was a German citizen, returned to serve in the Army, and in 1944 he was killed in an air raid. She and her sons had remained in Stockholm, and did not return to the United States to live until 1950.

"We lived at the Lindens," she said. "My mother sold the house and what remained of the land not long afterward, and we moved to a house in Plainfield. She died in 1960, and in 1968 I remarried and went to Germany to live."

Mrs. Gebhardt said she didn't see the Hell Gate until long after it opened. She said she thought it was a splendid structure, but it was clear that it was her father's Hudson River bridge project that evoked deeper emotions. "My father hoped it would be his monument, and he was always absolutely convinced that it was necessary and feasible," she said. "What Ammann did was to take the basic concept of the Fifty-seventh Street bridge and use it to build the George Washington. My father never criticized Ammann, and he admitted that Ammann had tried to persuade him to move the bridge uptown. 'After all,' he would say, 'you can't put a trademark on a bridge.'

"I saw Ammann many times in the years he was associated with my father. They were very different. You always knew when my father entered the room, but Ammann was modest and self-effacing. Anyway, in 1963, I think it was, while the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge was under construction, I decided I wanted to see him again after all those years. I called him, and he invited me to come to his office. He could not have been more considerate. I knew he was very ill, and I was deeply affected. He told me how much he had respected my father and how much he had learned from him. Neither of us alluded to the unpleasantness that had taken place. He gave me a book on his bridges and sent me an invitation to the dedication. I was in one of the first cars to go across."

ASTORIA has always been a respectable working-class and lower-middle-class community of row houses, apartment buildings of five and six stories, and modest detached houses on narrow lots. First came the Germans, many of them artisans at the Steinway & Sons piano factory, and the Irish, then the Italians, and since the early nineteen-thirties, in growing numbers, the Greeks. Astoria, it is said, now has more Greeks, by birth or parentage, than any city in the world except Athens. The Hell Gate viaduct soars above the humble shops and dwellings of Astoria like some magic highway, and the tower broods over Astoria Park like a castle keep. Late on a sweltering Sunday afternoon in August, it casts a long shadow across the north side of the park, deepening the shade of the plane and sycamore trees. The breeze from the river carries with it the rank odor of low tide. The north side is the quiet side of the park, remote from the barrage of noise laid down by throngs of children and adolescents on the athletic fields and in the swimming pool.

The people I spoke with that day were proud of their bridge, but, as good householders, they were sorry to see it so poorly maintained. While there is plenty of fresh paint on the base of the tower, it is all in the form of graffiti. Some of the great girders are so bare of paint that the name of the manufacturer, the American Bridge Company, impressed on the bare steel can be easily made out. The Astorians described—with pardonable exaggeration, perhaps—the hazard of falling ballast, bolts, and hunks of that handsome golden-tan concrete. A couple of them mentioned the head-on collision of two Amtrak trains in July of 1984, which took place on the viaduct not far from the park. It occurred while one of the passenger tracks was closed for repairs. One passenger was killed and scores were hurt. It was, as far as I could learn, the only fatal accident that has taken place on the Hell Gate or its approaches. In June of 1987, there was a less serious but more embarrassing mishap. A crane on a work train dropped a pallet of ties weighing over a ton. It struck the roof of the residence of an archbishop of a schismatic branch of the Greek Orthodox Church. Miraculously, one might say, the pallet did not crash through, crushing all within, but bounced off the sloping roof, causing only minor damage.

In 1988, murmurs of unease travelled upward to Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Water Resources, Transportation, and Infrastructure of the Committee on Environment and Public Works. Moynihan, who himself lived in Astoria for a while during his childhood, conducted a hearing there on the condition of the bridge. Last May, dissatisfied by the apparent lack of interest in the subject at the Department of Transportation or at Amtrak, extending to the D.O.T.'s failure to reply to one of his letters, he held a formal hearing on Capitol Hill.

Moynihan began by describing the bridge as "a great engineering miracle" and noting that it had not been painted in fifty years. The Triborough, he observed, was constantly being painted; a crew did nothing else. "Infrastructure is a serious issue," he went on. "We are disinvesting in the American plant. The national roof is leaking."

Crusty old Graham Claytor was present, but said that he would have to leave shortly because of a doctor's appointment. He said that it would cost forty-three million dollars to paint the bridge, fifteen million of which would have to be spent to remove the accumulated rust and what little remained of the lead-based paint in such a way as to prevent them from fouling earth, air, or water. He insisted that the bridge was structurally sound, and that he didn't have that kind of money to use for "cosmetic purposes."

So the Hell Gate won't get a full paint job anytime soon, but Moynihan, who has always been a great friend of Amtrak, got a consolation prize. Claytor later agreed to spend three million dollars this year on viaduct repairs and an engineering study. Since the study will be done by Amtrak engineers rather than by outsiders, it is unlikely to contradict Claytor's testimony that, structurally speaking, the Hell Gate is in fine shape.

—Tom Buckley

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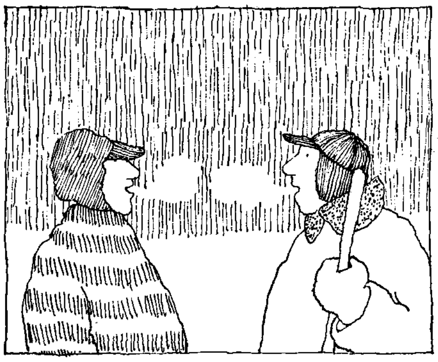
LETTER FROM EUROPE

LONDON

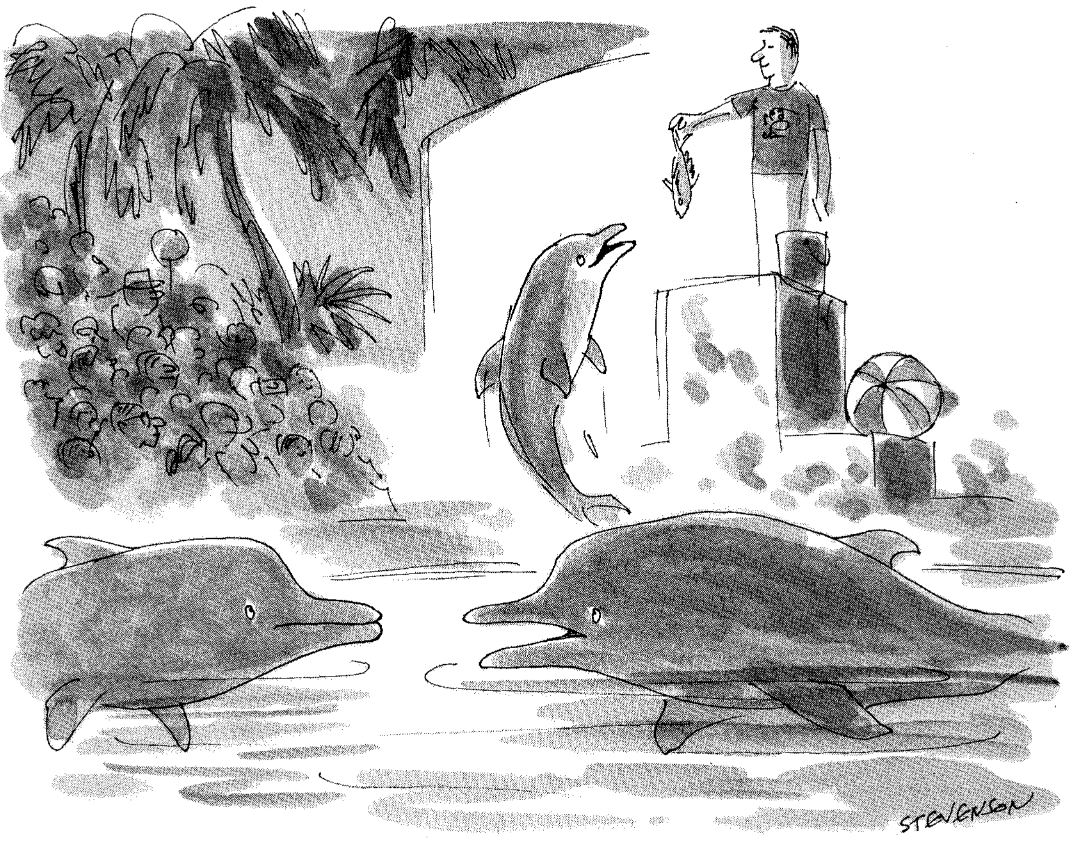
MY friend Tommy, who is Persian and Punjabi by origin, Pakistani by birth, British by nationality, and by choice and, perhaps, destiny a graduate student of post-colonial politics in a radical department of a redbrick English university, has given up drinking and reading Salman Rushdie. He likes to say that he is "by politics a Muslim," though it is hard to know exactly what being a Muslim in Britain means, two weeks after Salman Rushdie embraced Islam—and two years after Rushdie's novel "The Satanic Verses" was burned in the Yorkshire cities of Bolton and Bradford by Muslim workers trying to believe that the imagined heresies of one complicated, worldly, and fantastical book stood, somehow, for the real humiliations of an immigrant lifetime. The Bradford Muslims come mainly from two villages in Pakistan called Mirpur and Campbellpur. They were peasants in Pakistan. Their life was primitive even by the local standards. They practiced a fervent, syncretic, folk Islam that evoked the mystical presence of the saints and the Prophet—something most orthodox Arab Muslims, the "Knightsbridge Muslims," would find heretical in itself—and it is unlikely, even now, that many of them could read "The Satanic Verses" if they bought it, even if it were published in Urdu. They have as little (or as much) in common with those Knightsbridge Muslims, from the oil states, as they do with Bombay cosmopolitans like Salman Rushdie, or with the student I call Tommy and his friends, who meet in the cafeteria at the School of Oriental and African Studies, on Malet Street, across from Dillon's Book Store, to talk about *postmodernism and post-colonialism* and post-structuralism and the multicultural experience, or with the Yemeni millworkers who live in Leicester, or the Bengali cooks who live in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, or even Pakistanis who happen to come from other towns. Nothing in the past bound the Muslims here. Not faith. Not race or politics or the common experience of loneliness, ignorance, prejudice, or rejection. It was "The Satanic Verses" that marked them. They were a community waiting to be raised, and the book turned them into a constituency waiting to be exploited. They were the stuff of a moral majority—people otherwise ignored.

There are, by most estimates, anywhere from a million to a million and a half Muslims in the United Kingdom—certainly a million and a half if you include, with the South Asians and the Arabs, the black Muslims from Africa and from the old West Indian colonies and the "white Muslims," with amalgamated names like Daud Musa Pidcock, who belong to a party called the Islamic Party of Great Britain, and who are by and large converts. Half the two million Asians in Britain are Muslims. (The English call everybody from the Indian subcontinent "Asian," whereas they call the Chinese, say, "Chinese" and the Koreans "Koreans.") They have their roots in the Raj, in what is now India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, but many of them were born here, and by the end of the century the great majority of them will have been born here. Their population has doubled in the past twenty years—Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have the highest birth rate of any women in the country—and in towns like Bradford they account for fifteen or twenty per cent of the population.

To the anxious, xenophobic English, who have trouble distinguishing between foreigners to begin with, let alone between foreigners from the same Punjabi province, they can seem like half the population. They are, as one of Tommy's friends at the School of Oriental and African Studies put it, "bottom-line different." They would be different in the salons of Karachi and Bombay, and not just on the BBC nightly news shouting "Kill Rushdie!" and "Salman Rushdie must die!" To the extent that they remain different, the trouble that everyone calls "the Rushdie affair"—the trouble that began here with the publication of "The Satanic Verses" and the Bradford book burning and inspired the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to put a price on Salman Rushdie's head—is really about them, and about their rights in England and their rights *to* England. It is about being an immigrant in a country where identity has always been something settled, something particular—a country that never thought of itself as a place for, or even with, immigrants. It is about whether that country can transform itself to accommodate immigrants now, or should transform itself, or, indeed, will survive in a fractal "postmodern" world without transforming. It is about the civilization of hosts in conflict with the demands of strangers, about the unforeseen, inevitable implosion that has marked the end of the colonial adventure and turned Europe into a looking-glass world in which the frontier has relocated in the heart of the metropole, and strange, wild, incomprehensible Eastern people do indeed drop out of the sky and into Western life and assumptions, like Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta, Salman Rushdie's extravagant, exuberant heroes.



The historian Eric Hobsbawm said about the Rushdie affair that the trouble with the English is "we have no confusion as to who we are: the English are English, and anybody who isn't, isn't." He said the real reason the English won't let anyone assimilate is that it never occurs to them that assimilation is possible—a conviction they share, curiously, with the Muslim fundamentalists they criticize. English colonials were never educated to *be* English. To be English, they would have had to sail to England and breathe the air and read the history on English benches and in English libraries, and that was something reserved for a handful of rich men's sons, and for the math prodigies from Calcutta or Madras who were plucked out of village schools and sent to Cambridge, and eventually joined the faculty as token geniuses. There were rich Indian parliamentarians in England long before there was an Indian community—and, indeed, they were sent to England to represent their friends in India, and not the problems of whatever constituency was cajoled or bribed to put them in Westminster. A hundred years ago, a Parsi lawyer named Dadabhai Naoroji stood for Parliament as a Liberal (under the patronage of the



"In my view, management overrates the motivational appeal of mackerel."

Marquis of Ripon, who had bought him a constituency in Finsbury) and won, and then a Parsi lawyer named Mancherjee Bhownaggree stood as a Tory for Bethnal Green, and thirty years after that a Parsi named Shapurji Saklatvala stood for North Battersea, and won, first for Labour and two years later as a Communist. But Asian workers were not recruited in any numbers until the end of the Second World War, and most of those workers were in England anyway—Indian ships' stokers who had been stranded in Liverpool or Hull by the war and had made their way to Leeds and Bradford and the other mill towns, replacing as they went the young Welsh and Scottish millworkers killed in the fighting.

The Asians were known then as "the decent browns"—which meant mainly that they were cheap, tractable browns and did not complain and, in fact, had no one to complain to, being excluded from the Trades Union Congress by English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish workers who were barely on speaking terms among themselves. The Asians went anywhere there were jobs for them—there are Pakistani villages today on the outermost islands of the Outer Hebrides—and they kept to themselves, and as long as Britain needed people to do the work no one else wanted they were, in a manner of speaking, welcome. They made themselves useful. They set up little corner shops, where everyone in the family worked around the clock selling groceries, and the English got used to having a place that was always open, even nights and Sundays, when English shops are closed—a place where they could buy milk or beer or a bag of chips, or spicy, greasy exotic snacks with names like papadums and chapattis. In those days, the English approved of the Asians they saw working at the corner shops. They approved of the Asians' children. The children were thought to be diligent, obedient, compliant, quiet—not problem children, which is how the English thought of the West Indian kids who cut school and smoked dope and got in fights and preferred Bob Marley to Ringo Starr, and who seemed to have no interest in getting jobs and doing well or, indeed, in doing anything at all besides going to the nearest dole office of the Department of Health and Social Security once a week to collect their unemployment. The Asians made few claims, at first, on the social services. They worked all day and then went home to their neighborhoods and shut their doors. They rarely disturbed the bland tranquillity of English habit. They were maybe a little too keen, and it was generally agreed that they did not know how to treat their women, but in good times they provided a kind of background charm. They called to mind the rich incongruities of empire—Mr. Singh pumping gas in his turban, Mr. Patel lighting joss sticks in his takeaway shop, Mr. Ali in the tube station on his way to Friday prayers. In bad times, they were a convenient scourge.

At first, the Asians were able to enter freely, as old colonials and, by extension, British subjects. They had British passports—eventually "New Commonwealth" passports, which was the official way of saying "colored"—and the right to keep them as the empire dissolved. They came at first, like the North Africans in France, with the intention of getting rich and going home, but it was only a matter of time before the British started legislating against them. In 1968, under pressure from Enoch Powell's "rivers of blood" nationalists, on the right, and from Arthur Scargill's xenophobic trade unionists, on the left, Harold Wilson's second Labour Government wrote a Commonwealth Immigrants Act, restricting the entry rights of Commonwealth subjects whose parents or grandparents were not subjects of the United Kingdom. It worked, perversely, to make the immigrants stay; the immigrants stopped commuting and took out residence papers and sent to India and Pakistan for their families, and in the end there were more Asians in Britain than before.

For a while, the Asians did a lively business in marriages. Men who would ordinarily have entered the country on their old British passports wrote to marriage brokers in Leicester or Lon-

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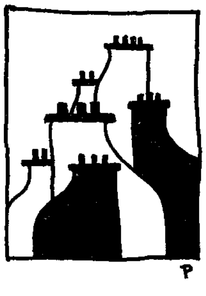
don, and the brokers put them in touch with British-Asian families with unmarried daughters, and, for a price, a match was made, and the happy husband immigrated as the new member of a British family. The British replied, in 1980, with what they called a "primary purpose" rule, which in effect allowed the immigration officers at the airport to turn back any immigrant whose marriage was not, to the officers' minds, "its own primary purpose." At first, the rule was meant to stop women marrying to bring in men, but in 1983 three women brought a case challenging the rule before the European Court of Human Rights, and the court ruled that it was sexist, and the British replied to *that* by extending the rule to stop men marrying to bring in women. By then, anyway, the issue was not immigration. The British talked about immigration and immigrants and about an "immigrant problem," but the real problem was the fact that thousands of brown-skinned British-born British subjects were growing up and marrying and producing more brown-skinned British-born British subjects, and those subjects raised disturbing questions about what being British meant. By 1983, forty per cent of the Asians here were born here—about half in London and most of the rest to families in the old industrial northern towns. They were known, whatever their origin, as the Pakis. It was not a salutary term. The English said "Paki" the way they said "wog" or "nigger." They went to the Paki's for their groceries, and they went Paki-bashing for amusement. Paki-bashing got to be so popular as a pastime among English skinheads that it entered the language as a synonym for "beating up foreigners."

The Asian kids made easy targets. They were often small. They were often gentle. They did not like fighting, the way (the English said) the black kids in Brent or Brixton liked fighting. They did not stake out territory to defend. Eric Hobsbawm says that twenty years earlier they would have been Marxists—they would have turned to something political to explain or even articulate their despair. Instead, they practiced an eccentric, evasive conformity that sometimes passed for assimilation. They said Muslim prayers and burned Hindu joss and watched Australian sitcoms and smoked American cigarettes and drank English lager. The boys fancied blue-eyed Irish girls and Rasta clubs. The girls wore jeans and practiced purdah. The parents wondered why children like theirs, with three or four South Asian languages, were always held back at school because their English was poor. A lot of the parents wanted to assimilate. They wanted to conform, to fit in, to disappear into an Englishness that would cover for their strange faith and stubborn customs—that may be why they practiced servility and discretion and hard work and whatever other English virtues the English allowed them—but their children were involved in another kind of Englishness, which exposed the children and challenged the parents and their fragile status. The children were insulted by the English, but they loved the intoxicating liberty of British culture. They were more concerned with discrimination in the disco than in the courts or the classroom or the local housing office. Their problem was not survival but identity.



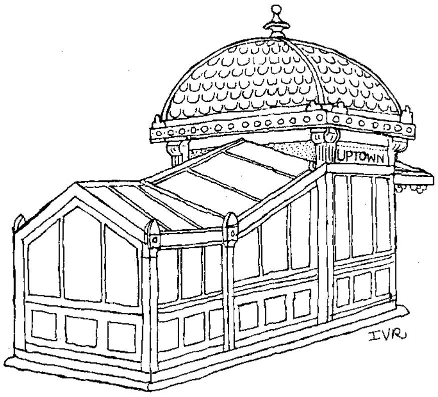
IT is easy to see how the various parties to the Salman Rushdie affair—the local Muslim politicos and the foreign power brokers—could engage those made-in-Britain Asian children to their own advantage. It is easy to see how the question of who those children were could be turned into the question of what kind of Muslims they were—of how much they hated Salman Rushdie and his novel. For them, being *something*—being Asian, injured, protesting; being brothers in an Islamic nation of a billion people—was much more interesting than being "not English," being not cool, being not assimilated, being not accepted. It made them a force in British politics, and, indeed, in Iranian politics, and in Indian and Pakistani and even Saudi politics. Rejecting Rushdie, they were a symbol. They were on the front page of every paper in the world, and they were irresistible to the Saudi and Iranian rulers fighting for newsprint legitimacy among the far-flung faithful. They were solicited in the mosques of Bradford and Tower Hamlets. They were offered money for protest marches. Muslim nationalists from the Jamaat-i-Islami in Pakistan used them to challenge Benazir Bhutto, and Muslim politicians from the Janata Party in India used them to challenge Rajiv Gandhi—to force rivals to ban "The Satanic Verses" or, better, defend "The Satanic Verses" and see their governments fall. They used the Muslims in England so that Muslims at home would keep on rioting, and policemen would keep on shooting them, and pious people would be horrified. It was quicker and more efficient—and it cost less—to export the Rushdie affair to England for the exposure than to leave the Islamic Revolution to creaking Third World parliamentary processes or bought votes or stuffed ballot boxes. One burned book in Bradford provided militant Islam with more prime time on Western television than the deaths of six Muslims demonstrating against the book in Islamabad or the injuries of a hundred Muslims demonstrating against it in Kashmir. And the result for Britain was that the immigrants it once had kept from assimilating started demanding *not* to assimilate—started demanding separate status, demanding that British laws and what the British like to call their Enlightenment values be suspended or changed to conform to the Islamic law the immigrants had left behind on the subcontinent. They started demanding the right to invoke their own theocratic sanctions against the freedoms of a secular state in which they had requested, and received, citizenship. They demanded, in effect, the right to create a theocracy within that state—saying that as long as they were in England, England was a Muslim country. They were disgruntled, defensive, and, suddenly, with the Rushdie affair, notorious, and it is hard to imagine how they could have been persuaded to ignore the quick symbols of community that they discovered—avoiding "The Satanic Verses" was surely as easy a way to "be" Muslim as avoiding gin or pork—and take up the grinding, anonymous business of confronting prejudice or poverty in their daily lives. Marx was in England when he decided that religion was the opiate of the people, and, while many Englishmen have pointed out that the opiate of the people was in fact opium (Anthony Burgess once wrote that laudanum had "reconciled, with a Sunday of dreams, the British proletariat to its damnable fate"), the old Marxists here believe that militant, immigrant Islam is the new opiate of a new British proletariat. They see the Islamic revival as a tactic, putting the immigrants beyond the reach of a "proper" politics. They say that it stands between the immigrants and their freedom, a mirror image of the system that exploits and excludes them now.

"THE SATANIC VERSES" was published on September 26, 1988, and banned in India on October 5th, and it was apparently Muslim activists in India, working through the Islamic Foundation of Leicester (a British Muslim foundation financed by Saudis and controlled to some degree by Pakistanis from the Jamaat-i-Islami), who first suggested that British Muslims try to get the book banned, too. Salman Rushdie was an enfant terrible in India, a local boy who had gone to Oxford and got to be famous in the West and spent his time with other famous people—and the book was bound to be controversial, and everybody in India who read books knew it. Rushdie's two other South Asia novels, "Shame" and "Midnight's Children," were notorious in India and Pakistan for what could be called their political blasphemies against (among others) Indira Gandhi, General Zia ul-Haq, and Benazir Bhutto. It was hard to imagine that the same people who had banned those books would ignore "The Satanic Verses," especially when the first important Asian review, in the *Times of India*, had made a great deal of how provocative the book was and how fierce the Muslim reaction was going to be. (Rushdie's friends assumed that the review was planted by enemies, but his enemies insisted that it was planted by friends, for the publicity.) There was fighting in Kashmir at the time, and the tension between Hindus and Muslims was even worse than usual. Less than a year earlier, the publication of a short story about a Muslim deaf-mute—it was called "Muhammad the Idiot"—was the occasion for a riot that lasted three days and ended with seventeen people dead and parts of the country in a state of emergency.

There is still a lot of what used to be called "the colonial mentality" in India and Pakistan. People believe (despite their best efforts not to believe) that nothing important happens that does not happen in Great Britain, and enough of them have contacts in Britain, and phones and faxes and Xeroxes to feed those contacts with local news, to make sure it happens here. Malise Ruthven, a British Islamicist who wrote a book about Rushdie called "A Satanic Affair," calls it "the Raj in reverse." His particular theory is that people from the Jamaat-i-Islami were in fact orchestrating the spread of the affair in England, but the evidence is that it would have spread anyway, and spread fast. A few weeks after the Muslims in India got in touch with the Muslims in Leicester, a delegation of British Muslims went to Oxford to call on the director of the Oxford Center for Mission Studies, Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali (who is the son of a Shiite Muslim who was converted to the Church of England), to ask for Church support. Another delegation called on the Home Secretary, Geoffrey Howe (who complained later to the BBC that "The Satanic Verses" was "extremely critical, and rude about us," and said that he had not liked it any better than the Muslims liked it). A third delegation petitioned Rushdie's publisher, Peter Mayer, at Viking-Penguin, to withdraw the book from bookstores. The Queen was approached. The Prime Minister was contacted. A weekly magazine called *Impact International*, which I have heard described as "the unofficial organ of Islam in England," put out a Salman Rushdie issue. Ali Mughram al-Ghamdi, the director of the London Central Mosque, was instructed to name a United Kingdom Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, which in theory was going to represent the British Council of Mosques and all the other British Muslim groups in a campaign to ban "The Satanic Verses."

Banning books is not something the British do. They maintain the traditions of a soapbox corner in Hyde Park and a parliamentary mudsling in which members shout insults at the Prime Minister, and it is unlikely that they would ever have been moved by petitions to ban a novel by one of their most important writers. It should have been clear, early on, to the people who organized the protests that there was no chance "The Satanic Verses" would be banned here. It was banned in India and Pakistan and South Africa and twenty other countries where it was considered dangerous to hard-won social or political arrangements, but not even Iran banned "The Satanic Verses." (The anthropologist Michael Fischer, who wrote an impressive scholarly account of the Rushdie affair called "Bombay Talkies, the Word and the World," pointed out that both "Midnight's Children" and "Shame" were published in Iran, and that "Shame" won the state prize for the best translation of a novel into Persian.) There was a mildly negative review in the literary supplement of *Kayhan*, the country's biggest daily paper, and after that no one outside the Koranic center in Qum paid much attention to "The Satanic Verses" until a group of Qum mullahs read a selection of twenty pages to the Ayatollah, and the Ayatollah issued his *fatwa*—a *fatwa* is a kind of Koranic brief, or edict—sentencing Salman Rushdie to death for writing "in opposition to Islam, the Prophet, and the Koran," and the Iranians moved, so to speak, to take over the anti-Rushdie monopoly. The selection included a passage about a crazy imam hiding in a Kensington flat, and, according to British diplomats who heard about the reading, "it was designed to send the old boy incandescent." Khomeini was eighty-eight, and failing, and his mullahs were determined to offer him a cause with which—at far less risk than with a hostage crisis and for far less money than with an eight-year war—he could revive his flagging authority as a leader and his angry battle against a corrupt West and a corrupted Islam.

For a while, there was talk of a Saudi *fatwa*. The Saudis claimed that Khomeini had acted without what could be called theological due process. They said that Rushdie was guilty but had not been sentenced "correctly." They put about the idea that, while the *fatwa* against him was appropriate, it was invalid for having been issued without a proper trial—that is, a trial held according to the Sharia, or Islamic

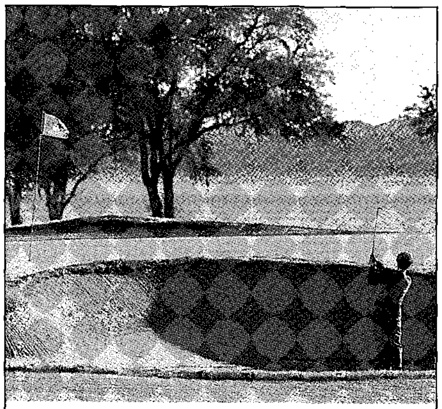


law, before an Islamic court, with Rushdie present. This gave the Saudis the chance to demand Rushdie's extradition "into Islam"—into a country under Islamic law. The obvious choice for them was Saudi Arabia.

The status of the *fatwa* was much discussed in academic circles in England. Arguments about the non-lieu of the *fatwa* became the scholars' equivalent of the arguments about political authority over Muslim immigrants in general. In the spring of 1989, Saudi ulema were said to be preparing a trial for Rushdie. Islamic scholars were writing briefs and wording the charges to be presented to (presumably) the judges in Mecca. Their claim that, whatever the Iranians said, Salman Rushdie could not be sentenced in absentia but had to be tried "in Islam by Islam" made a fine point, and was not much comfort or help to Salman Rushdie, hiding for his life, moving fifty or sixty times, never getting to see his child. In the end, it excited the white Islamicists much more than it did the Pakistani workers in Bradford or the Indian workers in Brent or the Bengali workers in East London, and the Saudis forgot about it, or seemed to forget about it, or, at least, stopped talking about it in meetings of the World Islamic League and the other Muslim organizations they dominated. The *fatwa* was Khomeini's. It gave him his last prominence. British Muslim workers repeated the words that Rushdie must die, and were frightened or delighted by the way they sounded, but they said of Khomeini that here at last was a bloke who had said "Fuck all!" to the Brits and made the Brits tremble. It is probably safe to say that making the Brits tremble is something every immigrant in Britain has dreamed of doing. In the end, the idea surely interests them as much as Salman Rushdie interests them, or even "The Satanic Verses" interests them. Most Asians were unmoved, and even surprised, when the English tried to persuade them to read the book before condemning it. They said it had never occurred to them to read it. The men in some British mosques appointed "representatives" to read it for them, and apparently some of the Muslim students—including my friend Tommy's sister, who is getting a doctorate—went to the bookstore, chose ten or fifteen pages at random, read *them*, and decided about the novel that way.

Michael Fischer says it would be interesting to see how many British Muslims would be able to identify the Satanic verses—"They are high flying birds, Their intercession is to be hoped for"—which Muhammad, deceived by Satan, either did or did not record as the word of God, and which are said to promote three goddesses of the Ka'ba to the intercessionary status of archangels, when the received truth is that angels are male. Professor Fischer is a Rushdie fan as well as a scholar of Islam, and he points out that Rushdie's story about Muhammad and his dream and the high-flying ladies (among other stories that were said to insult the Prophet) is a famous story in Hadith literature, and that learned Muslims have been arguing about it for hundreds of years, and, in fact, that "Rushdie's speculations in his novel . . . are no different than the debates in the long history of Islamic scholarship, which often too have drawn on humor, parables, analogies, and other devices of entertainment." But the immigrants here were less interested in what "The Satanic Verses" said than in what it was—a book that bore the imprimatur of the white world in which it had appeared, and which had received it warmly. Bhikhu Parekh, who teaches political theory at Hull and used to be active in the Commission for Racial Equality, wrote a piece for the *Independent* a few days after the *fatwa* was issued, and talked at length about the "suspicion and alienation" between the immigrant communities here and their intellectuals. He said that "the large masses of Asians have long felt that those Asians who write, make films and television programmes or engage in instant punditry about them do not understand their innermost hopes and fears, and that they earn a handsome living and white acclaim by selling tired stereotypes and biased stories," and that many Asians think of them as being as racist as the English. The older immigrants had their Koranic education back in Pakistan, in villages like Campbellpur and Mirpur—it was the only education they had, and it was often the only literacy they had. The mullahs and ulema they have now are usually the same teachers they had at home—village savants and self-made schoolmasters who would have nothing in common with the Koranic scholars in centers like Cairo who spend a lifetime arguing fine points of the same passage, or with the Sufi poets in Fez and Damascus, or with the students at Qum, on their long apprenticeship in Islamic literature and history, or with the professors at Princeton and Oxford who fill the chairs that a rich Iranian named Seyyed Ali Golestaneh endows for the study of Shiite mysticism. Their ulema guide them, like village priests, down paths as narrow and defended as the back paths—the women's walks—they build behind the council flats in their new English neighborhoods. The fact that there is a tradition of religious satire in Islam, or an "ironist" school of interpretation of the Suras and the Hadith, is not something that concerns them, and they would probably be as reluctant to acknowledge it as they are to acknowledge that a lot of educated Muslims think "The Satanic Verses" is a good book. The literary theorist Homi Bhabha says that the immigrants have taken "The Satanic Verses" outside the realm of fiction and "into the realm of intention"—and that the important question is therefore not whether the book is insulting to Islam but who *sees* it as insulting to Islam, and what this means to what Professor Bhabha calls "the project of modernity." He says the immigrants are simply expressing what postmodernists like him have been saying all along: that there is no "master narrative" for reality anymore; there is only what Rushdie once called "the *bricolage* of experience"—a kind of eternal argument in which the terms of the cultural exchange are always changing, always in the process of being undermined and reconstituted and undermined again. Homi Bhabha says that the only certainty now is the one certainty that fundamentalism resists—the certainty that there are no final vocabularies, and no communities that are "structured for all time," whether they are the great rationalist communities of the Enlightenment or the *umma* of orthodox Islam.

THE English used to believe they had a "multicultural society." It was a way of saying that they preferred their immigrants, and especially their Asian immigrants, to keep



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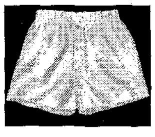

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their quaint customs and their religious enthusiasms to themselves. The English talked about assimilation as something Americans practiced, something peculiar to Americans, having to do with the American dream of a melting pot. They said that assimilation happened in America because being an immigrant, or having been an immigrant, or having had parents or grandparents who were immigrants, was an experience that all Americans but the Native Americans shared, and was part of the common definition of "American," as powerful in the end as any of the differences that kept Americans apart. But assimilation had nothing to do with England. If being English meant anything, it meant *not* being an immigrant. It meant being white, and Anglo-Saxon, and looking English and acting English and having a very particular English history, which was rooted in place and in common assumptions and expectations and illusions about the world. It was not something you thickened or enriched, like stock, with new ingredients from somebody else's garden, which is why the shock of the Rushdie affair in England had less to do with the English discovering their "immigrant problem"—everybody knew there was an immigrant problem—than with the English discovering that they were still so unprepared for their immigrant problem. It had to do with people realizing that, despite decades of immigration and legislation about immigration and violence against immigrants, there had been no real debate about the kind of society the British were going to make, or even wanted to make, once immigrants were a fact of British life. British-Asian writers like Salman Rushdie and Hanif Kureishi were describing that life in books and films, and British-Asian scholars like Homi Bhabha were theorizing about it in learned journals, and British-Asian students like Tommy were attending seminars called "Life After Colonialism" and "Post-Colonial Man." But the politicians ignored it. They pursued the Asian vote (and the West Indian vote) as if it were the old English vote cast and counted in another color, never asking themselves how they would respond to crises or resolve conflicts that had nothing to do with English values or English sentiments.

By the time "The Satanic Verses" was published, there were six "ethnic" seats in the House of Commons—six seats from constituencies where the Asian-and-black minority was a majority and controlled the vote—and Roy Hattersley, the Home Secretary in the Labour Shadow Cabinet and a member from one of those constituencies, in Birmingham, says that they were "wedded to Labour like steel." (Asians vote Labour three times as often as they vote Tory.) There were ten seats where immigrant voters held the margin, and neither Labour nor the Tories could win an election without them. There were three black members. The most powerful was a British Ghanaian barrister named Paul Boateng, whose Brent constituency represented the highest concentration of blacks and Asians in the country—and who had his eye on 1992, and European unity, and was determined to survive the subject of Salman Rushdie and stake his claims in a "black Europe" of sixteen million immigrant workers. There was one Asian member, the first since Shapurji Saklatvala retired his North Battersea seat, in 1929. His name was Keith Vaz. He was not a Muslim; he was a Christian from Goa, with a predominantly white constituency, and, unlike Boateng—who had made his reputation working for minority rights—he seems to have had no interest in Muslims until he saw his main chance in the Salman Rushdie affair, and marched with the Bradford book burners, and started talking about Islam as "a religion for the nineteen-nineties." By then, Bradford had had an Asian mayor. Southall, the first of the big Asian neighborhoods in London, had been organized for ten years. (The British National Front, which is a neo-Fascist party, had tried to hold a meeting in the Southall town hall, and the Southall Asians demonstrated, and the riot police arrived and arrested three hundred Asians—and after that they organized.) The Commission for Racial Equality had opened eighty-four "racial-equality councils" around the country, and there were at least as many Asian youth-movement groups funded by mosque councils. People were producing studies with names like "Black and White Britain," and were documenting cases of discrimination:

what it meant, say, when a local council stopped building the three- or four-bedroom flats that an extended Asian family, with three generations in residence, needed to survive; what it meant when a bright child was streamed into a trade-school apprenticeship because his English wasn't strong enough for the academic track; what, indeed, it meant when a fourteen-year-old Asian boy was shot from a car by three white boys on a rampage, and the boys explained themselves by saying, "So what, it's only a Paki," and the local police said that it was not a racist incident.

My friend Tommy collects what he sometimes calls "discrimination statistics." He says, for instance, that for years there were only ten or twenty Asians and blacks among eight thousand London firemen; it was understood that Asians were small and didn't meet the physical requirements, and that blacks were big but didn't meet the "mental requirements." For years, there were no blacks or Asians at the Palace, in the Queen's Household Division of the Grenadier and Cold Stream Guards; it was understood that they wouldn't have matched the white soldiers. In 1988, there was an Education Reform Act to emphasize "Christian curriculum" and British history, and Tommy says that thousands of parents—most particularly white parents—applied to take their children out of local schools and put them in schools that were better, or more congenial. In 1989, there was only one Asian family on the television soap "Eastenders," and Tommy says that they went to the pub so often they might as well have been English. In 1990, Norman Tebbit, who used to be the Tory Party chairman, suggested that the way to solve the immigration problem was to ask everyone who wanted to enter England whose cricket team he would support if it came to a choice between England and the country he was leaving.

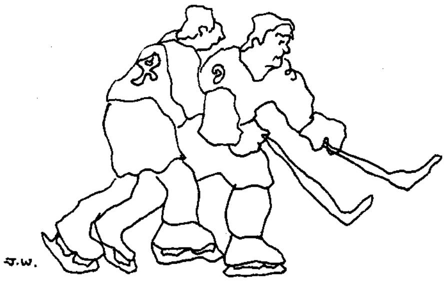
It is difficult to think of Tommy as an immigration problem. He lives with a group of other students, including a Catholic and a Jew and a couple of young women who are "into feminism," and he likes to dress in black, like a biker, and occasionally puts a coat of black polish on his fingernails. In Bradford, the "new" Islam appealed to young people who were perhaps intolerably confused—people who could not accept what Homi Bhabha has called the "incommensurability" of the immigrant experience. But Tommy and his friends are London children, disciples of Bhabha and Ernesto Laclau and quite comfortable with incommensurability, as well as with the "dialogic principle of culture" and the "project of modernity" and the "eternal argument," and they can spin fascinating theories about their own despair. The fact that many of them are embracing Muslim custom by way of denouncing Salman Rushdie (or what they think of as Salman Rushdie) is as striking as the fact that familiar, peaceable, dependable Yorkshire Muslims—the "decent browns" and their compliant children—are burning books and rioting and working themselves up into a commitment to murder. Tommy has come to believe that the understanding between the British and their "browns" has always been superficial, and always self-deceiving, on both sides.

The idea of community is something very different for Muslims than for Europeans. Community means "community of faith," and cannot be separated from politics or law. It makes no difference that orthodox Muslims describe it by talking about *umma* and Tommy describes it by talking about Adorno and Horkheimer and the theory of negative dialectics. Tommy says that he never thought much about community before, but during the Rushdie affair he began to think about it all the time. It was not so much that the book troubled him; it was British astonishment that the book *might* trouble him. He saw, he says, that there was something very exclusive beneath the rubric of Britishness. He and his friends, at their cafeteria lunches, began to wonder if the only choice they had in England was between becoming completely assimilated and becoming completely marginal. They wondered if the Rushdie affair was really a kind of attrition, the cost of a crisis that had started ten years earlier when Mrs. Thatcher, standing for her first term, said she could understand how English people were feeling "swamped" by foreigners, and respectable politicians began telling Muslims to learn to behave like Englishmen or go home. Tommy and his friends had thought of themselves as normal London students—in other words, left-wing students—but Tommy says that the left had no answer to the Rushdie affair, that the old left leaders like Michael Foot were mouthing the clichés of an aging liberalism and the new left leaders were talking about Salman Rushdie's paperback while the British Asians were talking about pain. In a way, they blamed the Rushdies they knew for the fact that Asian workers were moving into a defiant orthodoxy instead of what Tommy calls a defiant identity. They looked at the celebrities of the British-Asian left—Rushdie and Kureishi and the playwright Farrukh Dhondy, and Tariq Ali, who had been a student leader in 1968 and had moved, as Tommy put it, from Trotsky to Labour to a producer's office at Channel 4—and were disturbed by the high comedy those Asians made of the immigrants' experience. Being young, they took (or mistook) seriousness for respect. A lot of young Asian women started wearing headscarves to the library. They started saying that the few British-Asian feminists were dupes of a white, male plot to "control fecundity." They talked about their scarves "freeing them from the 'male gaze.' " Tommy, as I said, stopped drinking. He went to the same London parties and saw the same sophisticated London people, and he says that whenever those people asked him why he wasn't drinking and he told them he was "being political," they treated him like one of the mad mullahs on the evening news—they treated him like a Muslim.

Tommy says that he wondered, growing up, why anyone in England was a Muslim, since people tended to treat Islam as something shameful, on the order of a sexual disease. He says that as a boy the closest he came to answering the question "Who am I?" was watching old movie epics like "El Cid" and "Khartoum" and trying to ignore Charlton Heston and identifying with the bad guys—and discovering that he was no longer "not there," and wondering if Sioux and Apache children watching cowboy-and-Indian movies felt the same way. In the end, though, he identified with Charlton Heston, and sometimes he hated himself for it. He says he would ask himself—even now he asks himself—"What does it matter, after fourteen hundred years, if Muhammad was a wog, or a vampire, or even if Muhammad was *wrong*? Does that mean we don't exist? Does that mean we have produced nothing of value?"

THERE is an extremely active Council of Mosques in Bradford—which is one reason Bradford got to be known as the British Muslim capital during the Rushdie affair. Muslims organized there about ten years ago; they forced out a local principal—a white middle-school principal—who had attacked a "multicultural education" program that was providing *halal* meat twice a week to Bradford schoolchildren and making other concessions to foreign customs which the principal said were undermining "British traditions of understatement, civilized discourse and respect for reason." The principal, whose name was Ray Honeyford, had made his case for British traditions in the *Salisbury Review*, a radical right-wing quarterly devoted to "the consciousness of nationhood." He included a description of the "hysterical political temperament of the Indian subcontinent," and wrote off Pakistan as criminal, corrupt, and despotic. It was a fairly accurate description of General Zia's Pakistan, but it was not—as Hanif Kureishi pointed out in a piece he wrote about Bradford for *Granta*—"merely an alternative view on matters of education," and it reminded the Bradford Muslims that their principal had once described a parent, in the *Times Educational Supplement*, as having an accent "like that of Peter Sellers' Indian doctor on an off day."

The Bradford Muslims brought a case against Honeyford. It went to Britain's High Court and then to Britain's Appeals Court, and by the time it was settled, in 1985 (Honeyford "retired" early, with a hundred and sixty thousand pounds, the biggest redundancy settlement in the history of the country), he had such a reputation on the right that Mrs. Thatcher invited him to Downing Street to give his views on education policy. By then, too, the Bradford Muslims were organized. Their Council of Mosques had seventy thousand pounds in Bradford Council funds and represented twenty-two of the twenty-six mosques in the city. They had their Muslim mayor. They had a resident scholar named Shabbir Akhtar, who had come to Bradford with a Canadian doctorate, set himself up as a theologian, and proposed to the locals what Salman Rushdie's friend the writer Michael Ignatieff describes as "a rationalist's defense of fundamentalism." And they had as chairman of their Council of Mosques a supermarket manager named Sher Azam, who was an avid promoter of Bradford and himself, and wanted to use the Council as a kind of theological chamber of commerce. Sher Azam says that he heard about the Indian reaction to "The Satanic Verses" when friends in Blackburn sent him clippings about the book from Indian magazines. He asked the Bradford ulema to read excerpts from the book in Urdu, and they apparently did—and pronounced it blasphemous—because late in 1988 Azam and Akhtar and the rest of the board of the Council of Mosques demanded an injunction against it. When their suit failed, they were distressed enough, and shrewd enough, to see to it that the Bradford protests got more attention than any of the other protests that were taking place in England. Muslims in Bolton had burned "The Satanic Verses" early in December of 1988 and had suffered the humiliation of being totally ignored. The Bradford Muslims called the papers. They hired a British lawyer to advise them. They made a videotape of their book burning and sold the rights to use it. (They still charge what amounts to twenty-seven hundred dollars to anyone who wants to use the footage.) They ended up in the local press, and then in the national press, and by the end of the week half the world knew that the Bradford Muslims had burned "The Satanic Verses." They came to think of themselves as symbols of Muslim Britain. They supplied a lot of the "crazies" in the debates about Salman Rushdie on British television. They were interviewed, interrogated, scrutinized, and analyzed. They became experts in literary theory, Islamic theology, and

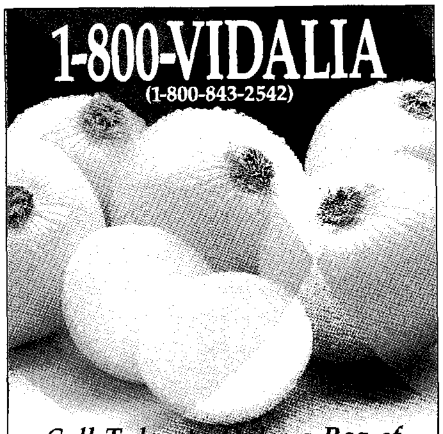


the British blasphemy law. Celebrities from the evening news followed them home from their garages and their corner shops and respectfully solicited their views on whether it was right or wrong to murder Salman Rushdie or to disestablish the Church of England.

Bradford is a bleak place, like every other mill town that has seen its mills close and its wealth vanish and Burgess's laudanum proletariat turn into a new kind of lumpenproletariat—a population on the dole. A quarter of the people are unemployed—more if you count the Asians alone—and there is literally nothing for them in Bradford: nothing to do, nothing to build from or build for. Investment in England moved south during Margaret Thatcher's eleven years to the extent that people describe England now the way they used to describe Italy, as two countries—a prosperous South England, and a godforsaken North England whose hopelessness and abandonment evoke the *miseria* of the Mezzogiorno, with its empty fields and alienated people. When strangers complain that the Bradford Muslims are unassimilated, they tend to forget that this is not only because of British snobbery or Muslim intransigence. In Bradford, there is very little to assimilate *into*—very little that could be called, positively, a British way of life. I have heard the culture of the north described as "the culture of loss." Its institutions are the pub, the council house, and the empty shopping mall where boys collect at night, under the neon lights, to rev their motorcycles and head for trouble.

It is not hard to exploit grievances in towns like Bradford. There are not many claims on anyone's identity. From the point of view of the Bradford Asians, "The Satanic Verses" was a book by a writer who didn't have to live in Bradford and, by all accounts, didn't want to live in Bradford—a writer who rejected them. Salman Rushdie was an easy grievance to invent, and an easy grievance to communicate. The Bradford Asians resented Asians like him. Many of them saw Rushdie's sophisticated English life as a comment on their own bleak English life and Rushdie's success as a comment on their own failure. The kind of success they could accept in other immigrants was something closer to their own experience. It was the kind of success the local mullah had when he got on the evening news and everybody saw him exhorting against the Great Satan, or the kind of success a Muslim merchant had when he cornered the local market in, say, radio cabs or groceries and all the English in the neighborhood had to depend on him in order to get along. It was the kind of success that was enviable, perhaps, but never threatening, never judgmental, the way Salman Rushdie's success was somehow threatening and judgmental. Rushdie's success raised questions of class and confidence and advantage which were bitter enough at home. In a place like Bradford, those questions were intolerable.

HALF the Muslims in Great Britain live in London, and their experience has always been different from the experience of Muslims in the mill towns. For one thing, discrimination is something they share with the Sikhs and Hindus here, not to mention the West Indians, and, indeed, a couple of million English and Irish workers who are also excluded from the pleasures of Central London life, by tube schedules and closing hours and other expressions of a deep, common conviction that the English working classes need to be home and in bed by eleven at night or England will suffer and decline from their fatigue. The fact that people enjoying London are apt to be rich white people who can afford to live in town—and to frequent clubs that serve after the pubs close, and to own cars or hire taxis to take them home—is not an injustice directed specifically at Muslims. Muslims used to be considered the most integrated of the Asian immigrants—"most integrated" being a London code for "least noticeable." You could spot a Sikh, for example, because Sikhs had long beards and wrapped their hair in turbans, and their wives wore baggy white cotton tunics and their children little white topknots. You could spot a Hindu, because his wife wore saris and had a red smudge on her forehead and sometimes a diamond stud on the side of her nose, above the right nostril. But Muslims were "discreet," people in London said—if you didn't count the Arabs, of course, and if you ignored the dark skin and the black hair. Most of the Asian Muslims dressed like Englishmen. And while most of their wives obeyed the Koranic injunction to "dress modestly



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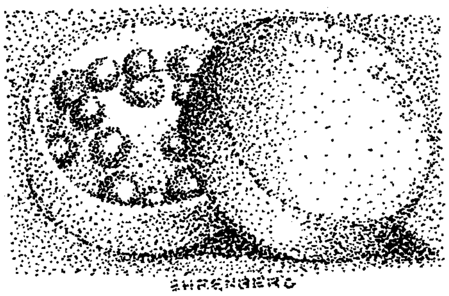
and cover the hair," and assumed the various forms of what the Asians call purdah and the Arabs *hijab*, the men so rarely went anywhere with their wives that no one outside their neighborhoods knew whether those wives were cloaked in chadors or draped fashionably in gauzy silk *dupattas*, like Benazir Bhutto. Then, too, the Asian Muslims were spread over many neighborhoods. A Bengali living in Brick Lane or Tower Hamlets or one of the other East London boroughs rarely saw a Pakistani from Brent or Southall, and almost never saw an Arab from Knightsbridge or Kensington. They went to their own mosques, and listened to ulema in their own languages, and, whereas most of the Hindus spoke Hindi and most of the Sikhs spoke Punjabi, the Muslims came from all over and spoke their own languages, and it would have been difficult for an Iranian from Plaistow to understand a word of the conversation a mile away in Spitalfields, at the mosque at the corner of Hessel Street and Brick Lane.

Not all that many British Muslims are Shiites, like the Iranians—people say about fifteen per cent, which is roughly the percentage of Shiites in Pakistan and, in fact, of Shiites in Islam. *Shia* comes from the Arabic *shi'at Ali*, or "taking the part of Ali," and refers to the followers of the Prophet's nephew (and son-in-law) Ali, who was the Fourth Caliph, and of Ali's son Husayn, who fought and was beheaded in a war over caliphal succession. Most Muslims are Sunni—*sunni* comes from the Arabic for something "firmly rooted," and refers to the followers of the Prophet's father-in-law, Abu Bakr, who was the First Caliph. Before the Rushdie affair, not many Englishmen could distinguish a Shiite immigrant from a Sunni immigrant. But there is a tradition of martyrdom in Shiism, and the Shiites the English saw on television, beating themselves with chains, were enacting the rituals of an ecstatic tradition, mourning the death of Husayn, whom they consider the "first martyr." The closest that most Englishmen came to Muslim immigrants and their faith and customs was chatting with the Paki in the corner shop or with the waiter in the local curry house. The Muslims *they* knew best were the Arabs, who were foreigners but rarely immigrants (and so were not included in the "Black and White Britain" breakdowns), and were by far the smallest—only ten per cent of the Muslims here—and the richest of the Muslim communities. The Arabs could afford to live in "white" London, in the smart neighborhoods, and to shop in white London, in the smart shops, where the ordinary Muslims could not, and Tommy says they had contempt for the immigrants. They thought that Islam belonged to them.

THE Arabs have been spending their oil money here for thirty years, but mainly it was the Saudis who spent any of it on the immigrants. Londoners got used to the sight of Kuwaiti or Abu Dhabian harems shopping together in Harrods, and filing into fleets of limousines at the Dorchester's front door, but the money invested in influence, and not just spread in affluence, was spent by the Saudi king and his princes in pursuit of the far-flung faithful—the Islamic diaspora, Muslim historians in the West call it. The Saudi royalty wanted the immigrants' favor. The Saudi royal family—the Wahhabis—wanted the immigrants to support them or, at least, not oppose them in their claim to the holy places, and to the oil around the holy places, and to the enormous income both produced. They built the immigrants' mosques and paid the immigrants' mullahs and ulema, and sometimes they even sat on the immigrants' mosque councils. Their money was carefully placed to fix the influence of the Wahhabis, who ruled at the indulgence of the West, among those people in the West who actually were Muslims, like them. The British Muslims watched enough television and saw enough movies to think of Saudis, if they thought of them at all, as pudgy despots who murdered their princesses for indiscretion but frequented women at the safe remove of Cap d'Antibes or Lake Geneva.

King Fahd himself was unpopular, even as despots go. He had hoped to settle his credibility with the faithful by becoming, officially, the Keeper of the Holy Places—it was a title he invented in the summer of 1987, when Iranians on a hajj began rioting in Mecca, and the Saudi police opened fire, and four hundred pilgrims were killed. But with the Iranians demanding "the liberation of the holy places," accusing Fahd of profiteering at the holy places and running them like carnivals and never taking care of them properly (last summer, the air supply failed in a pedestrian tunnel from Mecca to a tent city called Mina, and more than fourteen hundred pilgrims died), Fahd decided to be Keeper of the Holy People, too, even if those people were Pakistanis selling beer at a Brent pub or Bengalis running numbers from a Spitalfields newsstand.



The Saudis always worked through the mosques here. In 1978, they paid for the London Central Mosque—which Muslims call the Regent's Park Mosque, because it sits at the edge of the park, on land they got from the British after the British used land in Cairo for a Church of England cathedral, and which is one of the biggest mosques in the country, with room for five thousand men at prayer (but not much room for women, the Muslim women say) and five different holiday congregations. The Saudis installed as head of the mosque a civilized and scholarly Egyptian by the name of Zaki Badawi (who responded to Khomeini's *fatwa* against Rushdie by inviting Rushdie to live at his house), and when Dr. Badawi proved to be too liberal for their purposes they replaced him with Ali Mugram al-Ghamdi, a Saudi geographer with no theological credentials, whom they judged, correctly, to be more compliant. It isn't surprising that the people who got to spend the Wahhabis' money were close to them in their thinking—people who shared their dislike of other Sunni rulers, like Benazir Bhutto, who to their minds were secular and worldly, as much as they shared their fear of Shiites like Khomeini, who traditionally undermined their influence. The Saudis' most notorious client was the British rock star Cat Stevens (he is Yusuf Islam now, and tells everyone that Salman Rushdie must "die for his crimes"), who got five million dollars from a Saudi mufti to found a Muslim

"My son the lawyer is suing my son the doctor for malpractice."

school, in Brent, where music, sports, and Darwin were forbidden. Stevens borrows the Regent's Park Mosque on Thursday afternoons for a fundamentalist instruction group he runs called the Islamic Circle.

Bishop Nazir-Ali says that to understand the politics of Muslims abroad you have to accept that Muslims are not only under the obligation of jihad but also, by extension, under the obligation of vigilance against each other. Islam does not recognize the right of Muslims to break the faith. For Muslims, there is no such thing as an "assimilated Muslim" or a "lapsed Muslim" or a Muslim agnostic or a Muslim atheist or a Muslim who is converted, like the Bishop's father. There are only blasphemers, heretics, and apostates. The Pakistani fundamentalist Sayyid Abu al-Ala Mawdudi, who founded the Jamaat-i-Islami in 1941, used to preach that "for the entire human race, there is only one way of life which is Right in the eyes of God and that is al-Islam." He once compared Islam to a one-way door, because you can enter Islam easily but can never leave it. (This is why some Muslims refused to accept Rushdie's argument that he had not blasphemed because he was not a Muslim anymore, and why they refuse now to accept his "conversion.") Jihad can be interpreted as anything from missionizing to fighting, and Bishop Nazir-Ali says it is not the commitment to jihad but the interpretation and exercise of jihad that differs with the orthodoxy and intentions of the leaders involved.

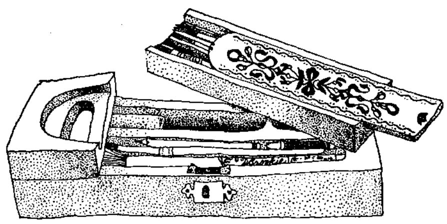
The interests of the Saudis in England had to do with a very pragmatic notion of jihad: the Saudis assumed that the recovery of a million citizens of the Islamic diaspora from apostatic longings would in the end underline the legitimacy of their dynasty and their claims to the Arabian peninsula. Those interests were by definition international. There is not a Muslim leader of any power who has not entertained the possibility that his own particular nationalism is in fact Islamic internationalism—that his proper subjects are not only the people he rules now but the peoples of a "Muslim nation" constituted by faith and spread wherever there are Muslims living. The Saudis used to finance a propagandist in Britain named Kalim Siddiqi, who spent their money on what he sometimes called "rewriting Muslim politics" and sometimes "disengaging from the West at the intellectual level." Siddiqi, who has a degree from University College, London, and worked briefly at *The Guardian*, broke with his backers in 1978 (Dr. Badawi says there was an argument about money), and a year later he discovered the Iranian revolution and became a professional zealot in the Iranian cause. He is known to every Englishman with a television set. He has been urging the immigrants to murder Rushdie ever since the *fatwa* was issued—he was nearly charged with incitement to murder, and English liberals like to point out that in a country like France he would have been stripped of citizenship and deported, whereas in England he was protected by the same laws that protect Salman Rushdie—and last month, after Britain and Iran had established relations for the fourth time since the revolution, he left for Tehran to try to persuade Hashemi Rafsanjani, the Iranian President, not to give in and lift the *fatwa* now.

Dr. Siddiqi wants the British to create (among other things) what he calls a "non-territorial" Parliament for British Muslims, who will presumably use it to write their own laws and administer their own justice. He has convinced a good many of those Muslims that British Islam is indeed its own state, a kind of portable nation, and that in cases of conflict with the British state, Islam and its laws take precedence. Siddiqi works out of an office next to his house in Slough called the Muslim Institute, which is registered as a charitable trust and is something on the order of a one-man think tank—and which I have often heard described as a conduit for Iranian money entering England. There is nothing unusual, per se, about British think tanks' getting money from foreign governments, or representing foreign governments or other foreign interests—especially since there are no lobbies here, and no legal provision for lobbying. (Dr. Badawi got money from Libya for a think tank he calls the Muslim College after the Saudis fired him from the Regent's Park Mosque.) British universities often accept money on proviso, and one way Iranians have lobbied, in effect, has been by endowing chairs and institutes and research centers and planting their own people in them. Islamic studies have always been political here, and, by and large, so have the Islamicists. They used to go straight from Oxbridge to the Colonial Office, and now they go straight from Oxbridge to the Foreign Office, and the ones who stay in college have a keen interest in influencing policy. The Muslim leadership in England is rife with feuds and rivalries, and everyone involved in Muslim politics tries to use the feuders—to court them or to buy them or simply to provide them with a base and make them comfortable.

STILL, it is debatable whether the Iranians would have got involved in the Rushdie affair if the Saudis hadn't tried to exploit it. Some Iranians believe that the mullahs' decision to support a *fatwa* against Rushdie had very little to do with Rushdie *or* his book. They think the decision was made in anticipation of Khomeini's death, and had to do with the religious politics in Qum—which were the politics of succession, and of the temper of the succession—and was a victory for the "purist" faction and for the idea that their revolution continue. The British had already recalled their diplomats twice from Iran—first in 1980, when a group of Iranian terrorists seized the Iranian Embassy in London and murdered two hostages, and then in 1987, when an Iranian from the consulate in Manchester was arrested for stealing five pairs of socks and a plastic pocketbook from a local department store and the Iranians retaliated by abducting the British deputy head of mission in Tehran and accusing him of a series of capital crimes that ran from drug trafficking to "speculating in gold for the purposes of undermining the Iranian economy in wartime." (The diplomats were exchanged.)

The third mission that was sent arrived in Tehran in December, 1988, two months after "The Satanic Verses" was published. It lasted through the plane crash at Lockerbie—when two hundred and seventy Americans, flying home for Christmas, were killed by a bomb—and through the Bradford book burning, and was finally recalled six days after the *fatwa*, as were the heads of all the other European Community missions. The *fatwa* was in its second year (and Khomeni had died) by the time the British tried again. By then, the Special Branch—which is the national-security branch of the British police—had informers in most of the three hundred and eighty-two mosques in Britain. The Foreign Office had circulated a secret two-volume report on Muslim political activity written by one of its Islamicists and called (with no evident irony) "Islam Observed." An Iranian terrorist had blown himself up in a hotel room near Paddington Station, handling a bomb that was meant to blow up Rushdie. And the government had deported more than twenty Iranians, nine of them students, as foreign agents. Some of the students were known to have been organizing in the mosques in East London and Plaistow. There were reports of plots and cells in other "well-defined pockets of activity," though not much agreement on which pockets of activity they were.

A few days after the Bradford book burning, Salman Rushdie had with some confidence talked to Jonathan Randal, of the Washington *Post*, about "a very carefully orchestrated campaign . . . run by a number of extremists centered on the Regent's Park Mosque," and funded largely by Saudi and Iranian interests, but that particular campaign had to do with discrediting Rushdie, not with murdering him—with getting his book banned and Rushdie himself prosecuted for blasphemy under British law. It had to do with exposing what Homi Bhabha calls "the liberal fundamentalists"—meaning intellectuals like himself who tend to accept that writers inhabit a special social space, and have their own, almost priestly privileges, and are accountable to a "truth" not available to ordinary men and women. But once the *fatwa* was issued and the Ayatollah offered a bounty on Rushdie's head—it started as a million and a half dollars, but people contributed and now it is closer to five million—it was clear that professionals were going to try to enter the country in various disguises, and that the Muslims who are known in England as the "crazies" were going to have a field day, and that ordinary British Asians with heroic fantasies would discover the heady pleasures of plots and clandestinity.



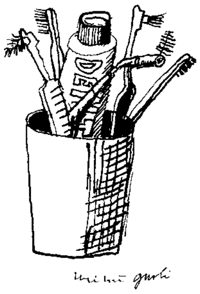
One thing that British Islamicists seem to have understood about the Rushdie affair is that, however small the Shiite population here, there is what could be called a "hidden Shiism" among the Sunnis from the subcontinent—an impulse to martyrdom, a fervor that attaches itself easily to figures like Khomeini, a native populism that made it easy for Sunni workers from Pakistan and Bangladesh to hang Khomeini's picture on their sitting-room walls or march on Parliament to support his *fatwa*. Some Islamicists have compared the Shiite revival in Islam to liberation theology in Latin America, because in both cases the leaders of a mass religious movement have been able to mobilize masses of poor people, and to give them a sense of power, and, in the end, to threaten all the old hierarchies, religious and political.

In theory, Sunnis and Shiites are still fighting the wars of caliphal succession. If you ask a Sunni from Southall what he thinks of Shiism, he will probably say some of the same terrible things he says about Salman Rushdie (who comes from a Sunni family), but insofar as he is poor and is feeling put down and put upon in England he will respond to a Shiite like Khomeini, who says that Islam is the revolution that will free him. Immigrant communities are vulnerable to fundamentalism. In France, where there are three million North African Muslims (immigrants and their children and grandchildren), the Muslim Brotherhood is installed, like religious police, in every immigrant neighborhood. What makes England different is that in England the immigrants are a prize being contested by any number of groups like the Muslim Brotherhood, each with its loyalties, and as long as they *are* contested they are more important to the political arrangements thousands of miles away in the Gulf or in India or Pakistan than they are in England, working on their own behalf.

It is not so clear what Khomeini stood to gain then, or what Rafsanjani or the new Ayatollah, Ali Khamenei, stands to gain now, from one dead writer. Rushdie is a *cause célèbre* only as long as he is alive to *be* a *cause célèbre*. He is not much use otherwise to any faction—and this may be why policemen who have followed the Rushdie affair tend to think that the real danger to Rushdie now, two years into the *fatwa* and two weeks into Rushdie's public "reconciliation" with Islam, lies with some angry and obscure Pakistani worker or with a mullah from one of the local mosques, somebody no one suspects, or has ever heard of, rather than with an Iranian secret agent or a professional terrorist. Rushdie has been a bandwagon for those mullahs. They never had the status among immigrants that they have now. Certainly young Pakistanis never took them very seriously, or listened to them very seriously, until Rushdie taught them the uses of hyperbole, and they learned that in England the most important Muslim is the Muslim who commands the most attention. Their hyperbole was catching. For a while, their leaders got caught in a kind of one-upmanship of indignation. Ali Mugram al-Ghamdi called "The Satanic Verses" "the most offensive, filthy and abusive book ever written by any hostile enemy of Islam." Sayyed Abdul Quddus, the joint secretary of the Bradford Council of Mosques (and the man who set the match to "The Satanic Verses"), said, "Rushdie has tortured Islam and has to pay the penalty for it. He deserves hanging." Iqbal Sakranie, an accountant on the United Kingdom Action Committee on Islamic Affairs, said, "Death, perhaps, is a bit too easy for him . . . his mind must be tormented for the rest of his life unless he asks forgiveness of Almighty Allah."

Kalim Siddiqi, who was considered the most telegenic of the anti-Rushdie people because of his chubby, professorial looks and his old cardigans and rumpled tweeds, outdid them all by saying he had "circumstantial evidence" concerning the publication of "The Satanic Verses" and could prove that the book was part of a Western conspiracy against Islam which had been worked out during the Crusades and was still in force. Last week, he said that the "sad fact" was that Rushdie "could never be forgiven."

THE British blasphemy law was incorporated into common law in the seventeenth century, after the Restoration. It was meant to protect the Church of England, as the state church, carrying the authority of the Crown, from what was called "seditious calumny." In effect, it was meant to protect the most important institution of the Crown—the one that conferred on England's kings a God-given right to rule—from dissidence. It had to do with an established church, and it is doubtful whether the law could be interpreted or extended, even now, to cover the disestablished Christian churches—the Methodists and the Presbyterians and the other chapel congregations—let alone Judaism or Islam, or, for that matter, Hinduism or Buddhism or Zoroastrianism or any of the other religions that British immigrants practice. (No one invokes the blasphemy law when, say, people call Kali a "pagan goddess.") But it used to be vigorously applied in Church of England circles, as a simple and convenient way of disciplining enemies and rivals. The most famous victim of the blasphemy law was the eighteenth-century Cambridge theologian Thomas Woolston, who was prosecuted for denying the literal truth of the Christian miracles—he had suggested that the Gospels were allegories—and was convicted, and spent the rest of his life in prison. The law is understandably out of fashion now. It was invoked once in the nineteen-twenties, and no one used it again until 1977, when a right-wing activist named Mary Whitehouse (who now sits in the House of Lords) brought suit against a magazine called *Gay News* for publishing a poem that involved Jesus as a homosexual love object. (Eric Hobsbawm says that to understand the Rushdie affair you have to think of what would happen in Poland, or in Ireland, if someone tried publishing that poem.) Most people tempted to invoke the blasphemy law were diverted by counsel to more conventional expressions of distress—the libel laws or the Public Order Act or the law against publishing racist abuse or the law against offending public decency. The public-decency law was invoked in 1987 when a sculptor exhibited a mannequin's head with freeze-dried fetuses for earrings, and that same year the Royal Court had to stop production of a play called "Perdition," about Hungarian Zionists collaborating during the war, which Immanuel Jakobovits, Britain's chief rabbi, considered anti-Semitic.

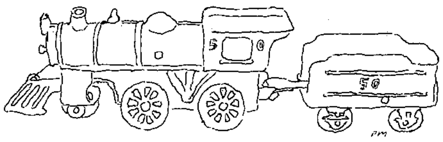


Immanuel Jakobovits was a defender of the blasphemy law. Like many of the Church of England clerics, he wanted to see the blasphemy law extended to "protect" all the faiths in Britain—including, it can be presumed, his own. He is an Orthodox Jew and, by reputation, an authoritarian character, and he was much criticized by liberal Jews for his interventions in the Rushdie affair—he said he agreed with his Muslim friends that "The Satanic Verses" was blasphemous and should be banned. Liberal English Jews, like English liberals in general, would prefer finally to separate the church and the state, and abolish the blasphemy law as a form of censorship. The blasphemy law is different from other British laws involving freedom of speech and freedom of expression, because intent is irrelevant in cases of blasphemy. The only "liberals" who want to extend that law rather than revoke it are liberals in the Anglican clergy, who are usually quite fierce about defending civil liberties, but who want what Tommy calls "a more global articulation of religion in the post-colonial discourse." Bishop Nazir-Ali, who is one of those liberal clergymen, explains it by saying, "It's not the theological aspect of the Rushdie affair but the social consequence that interests me."

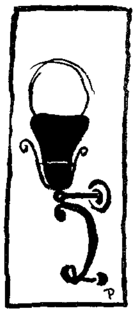
Liberal priests and bishops like Nazir-Ali are often accused of being "wet." The Anglo-Catholics and evangelicals, who are the majority of the faithful but often the minority of the clergy, claim that the Church of England is full of wets, and are eager to expose them as meddlesome, muddleheaded, and sentimental, and the Salman Rushdie affair has been the best chance they had since the Bishop of Durham took up Thomas Woolston's argument about whether Christ's bones could really be said to have gone to Heaven three days after the Crucifixion and tried to relate it to the politics of England's unemployed coal miners. Anglo-Catholics are rarely wet. They regard the causes their liberal colleagues are always taking up as symptoms of the same sloppy ecumenicalism that reduced the Mass in most Church of England churches to comfortable ritual chat and took the mystery out of the holy sacraments and opened the door to women priests and gay marriages. Anglo-Catholics believe in the supremacy of the Church of England. They think of the blasphemy law as having to do exclusively with them, and the idea of extending it to any other church strikes them as fairly blasphemous itself. Oddly, it is Anglican evangelicals—the Church of England's own fundamentalists—who talk most often about abolishing the blasphemy law. The words they use about blasphemy and the Rushdie affair are words like "affirmation" and "conversion." Patrick Sookhdeo, the minister of two London churches—St. Andrews Church, in Plaistow, and a Tamil-speaking evangelical congregation—is a convert to evangelical Christianity. He says that, as an evangelical ministering to twenty-three nationalities in a neighborhood where forty per cent of the population is Asian (and where the local mullah used to preach every Friday for Rushdie's death, and one Iranian has been deported as a terrorist), he has come to believe that it is more important to write new laws that "affirm conversion and protect converts" and encourage what he calls "a national identity as British" than to waste time arguing about the blasphemy law and whom it covers and what blasphemy means. Evangelicals, of course, tend not to believe in metaphorical truth or allegorical truth or in different vocabularies for divinity. They believe (like Dante, like the mullahs who bewilder them now) in the revealed literal truth of doctrine, and many of them consider the issue of blasphemy against Islam to be a false issue, saying you cannot blaspheme against a false prophet—you can blaspheme only against God-in-Christ as He appears in their version of the Bible.

NO one knows how long the Rushdie affair will last, or can last. Rushdie came out of hiding this fall to film a television interview for London Weekend Television, and in December he showed up at three London bookstores to sign copies of his latest book, which is a children's fable called "Haroun and the Sea of Stories," written for his son, Zafar—and on Christmas Eve, in London, after some negotiation and in the presence of six Muslims, he affirmed the tenets of the faith and entered "into the body of Islam after a lifetime spent outside it." He was also, of course, trying to enter the world. There have not been any demonstrations against him to equal the one in May, 1989, when fifty thousand British Muslims marched on Parliament to demand that "The Satanic Verses" be banned. The Saudis gave a million dollars to the people who organized that march—after the organizers let it be known that if the Saudis didn't pay the Iranians would—and it may be that both the Saudis *and* the Iranians, being preoccupied with Iraq, have lost interest in sponsoring British marches. The main organizer of the march—a Bengali businessman from the Brick Lane Mosque named Abdal Hussain Chowdhury—formed a committee called the Muslim Action Front to petition the High Court in London to try Salman Rushdie under the present blasphemy law. In June, 1989, the court agreed to a judicial review of a case against Rushdie, but last April the case was rejected—and, with it, any control the Saudis may have had over the course of the Rushdie affair in Britain. Two months later, Kalim Siddiqi, with Iranian backing, published his Muslim Manifesto for the introduction of Islamic justice in Britain. But by the end of the year Britain and Iran had exchanged their diplomats, and Hesham el-Essawy, an Egyptian from the Islamic Society for the Promotion of Religious Tolerance, had brought Rushdie together with the six Muslims, and Rushdie had affirmed that "there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is his last prophet" and agreed not to publish a paperback of "The Satanic Verses" (though not to withdraw the hardback from circulation). Rushdie's friends read his statement on Christmas morning in the paper. Some of them got angry—the playwright Arnold Wesker said that "the religious terrorists have won"—and some were relieved, and turned the page to see what else was going on in England, and if there was likely to be a war in the Persian Gulf. No one in Iran forgave Rushdie, or was in a position to forgive Rushdie, because the Ayatollah Khamenei quickly announced that the *fatwa* held and Rushdie had to die, "even if he repents, and becomes the most pious man of his time."

THERE used to be one category for all the immigrants in England who were not European, and that was "black." The Indians and Pakistanis had a subcategory of their own—"Asian"—but "black" was the official word, the word that told them that, as far as the English were concerned, everybody who was not English was the same black stranger. The categories changed after a sample census in 1989. There is now a category "black" that includes African immigrants and Afro-Caribbean immigrants and a potluck group called "others," but there is no general "Asian" category or subcategory—there is "Indian," "Pakistani," "Bengali," and so on through the various Asian immigrant groups. Bhikhu Parekh, who is fascinated by what he calls "this process of naming" and by what it says about the people who name and the people who get named (the way Rushdie is fascinated by the ironies and ambiguities of naming in "The Satanic Verses"), says that Asians see themselves by nationality and blacks by race, and that for an Asian the important thing is "nation"—political nation, Muslim nation—while for a black the important thing is his black skin.



Over the last few years, it was fashionable among British-Asian intellectuals to "be black." Young Asians called themselves "blacks." They said that by calling themselves "blacks" they exposed the official view of immigrants. Some of them used "black" ironically and some politically and some passionately but all of them used it to say something about black pride and British prejudice, and about being powerless in Britain. The feminists in Southall called themselves the Southall Black Sisters, and it didn't matter that the Sisters were run by a Jordanian woman and a Pakistani woman or that they had their headquarters and shelter in a neighborhood where eighty per cent of the population was Asian. The Asian artists and writers who wanted to support Rushdie called themselves Black Voices in Defense of Salman Rushdie. (It was at a time when it looked as if all the prominent pro-Rushdie people were white liberals indulging what Professor Parekh describes as "a conviction that all religion is fundamentalist.") But blacks themselves were not much interested in Rushdie. Blacks in Britain worried less about British prejudice against Asians than about Asian prejudice against them, and Salman Rushdie never concerned them as much as, say, the Uganda Asian girl from Birmingham who was killed by her father a couple of years ago for getting pregnant by a black boyfriend. Many of the Asians were not that interested in Rushdie, either. It was mainly the Pakistanis who organized against him. The Muslims from India were never very active, and Bhikhu Parekh says that the Muslims from Bangladesh who were not East London Muslims rarely talked about Rushdie at all. As for the Sikhs and Hindus, their reaction to the Rushdie affair was initially to complain that Muslim fundamentalism was giving Asians a bad name.



Marc Jaffrey, a young counsellor at the racial-equality councils in Ealing and Southall, says that using "black" was meant to be a way for Asians to get to the heart of their own problem—to make people understand that the skinhead beating up the Paki was doing it not because the Paki was Muslim but because the Paki was foreign, and colored. Some people thought the Rushdie affair would serve the same purpose. Asians who supported Rushdie assumed that it would raise the consciousness of the "black" left to the real issues of rage and helplessness among immigrants, issues that were seldom raised by white people meeting in London to discuss free speech and English values. The problem was that no one agreed on what those real issues were. Paul Boateng said that the Rushdie affair was decadent and diversionary and "aberrant," and that it involved only "a few people in a few mosques with a few journalists" and had nothing to do with "the black discourse," which was about immigration policy and race relations and the shutting of borders. Boateng had refused to join a black parliamentary caucus (the two other black members joined it, and so did the Asian member, Keith Vaz), and he refused to support the caucus's call for a ban on "The Satanic Verses." But students like Tommy said the black discourse was a smoke-screen—it joined the argument in the old official terms of race and racism.

Tommy has a theory about the Muslims who are in Europe now. He says that since the Middle Ages the Jew has been the enemy within Europe, and the Muslim the enemy without, and that now not only are Jews and Muslims fighting each other but they are both in and out of Europe at the same time, complicating everything. He says that Europeans, in distress, have been narrowing their definition of what being European means—narrowing it to something white and Christian, if not in fact then in its characteristic attitudes—but that the barbarians are now *within* the gates. They are part of the biggest migration of labor since the Roman Empire, and nobody knows what to do with them except to send them home. Tommy thinks that the "mad mullah" has become a trope—the way the figure of Shylock is a trope—and he says that people are talking about the Koran as if it were a document of conspiracy, a kind of Muslim "Protocols of Zion." Rushdie has been quoting Dostoyevski, saying that Dostoyevski, in prison, thirsted for faith and found it, because "truth shines in misfortune." Tommy also likes to quote Dostoyevski, who said that if you want to save your people you have to love them.

Tommy says that about ten years ago there was a moment when everybody talked about a Rainbow Coalition, which was going to involve Asians and blacks and gays and feminists, and replace the "white, male, Labour Party power" on the British left. There was a radical Greater London Council—Mrs. Thatcher took care of the Council by abolishing it in 1986—and the Council was handing out "empowerment grants" of five thousand pounds to people in immigrant neighborhoods. The message then was "We're all black together." But the truth is that nobody felt black together, and the moment passed, and from Tommy's point of view the first "radical moment" since then was the moment the Bradford Muslims burned "The Satanic Verses." I wonder how radical the Bradford Muslims feel now. They were not well served by the people who claim to lead them, and today they are told that Rushdie has made his peace not with them but with sophisticated Egyptians who are closer to his world than to anything remotely like theirs. Hating Rushdie did not solve any of their problems. It merely distracted them from their problems, perhaps for longer than they could afford to be distracted.

—JANE KRAMER

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

Vanity, Vanities

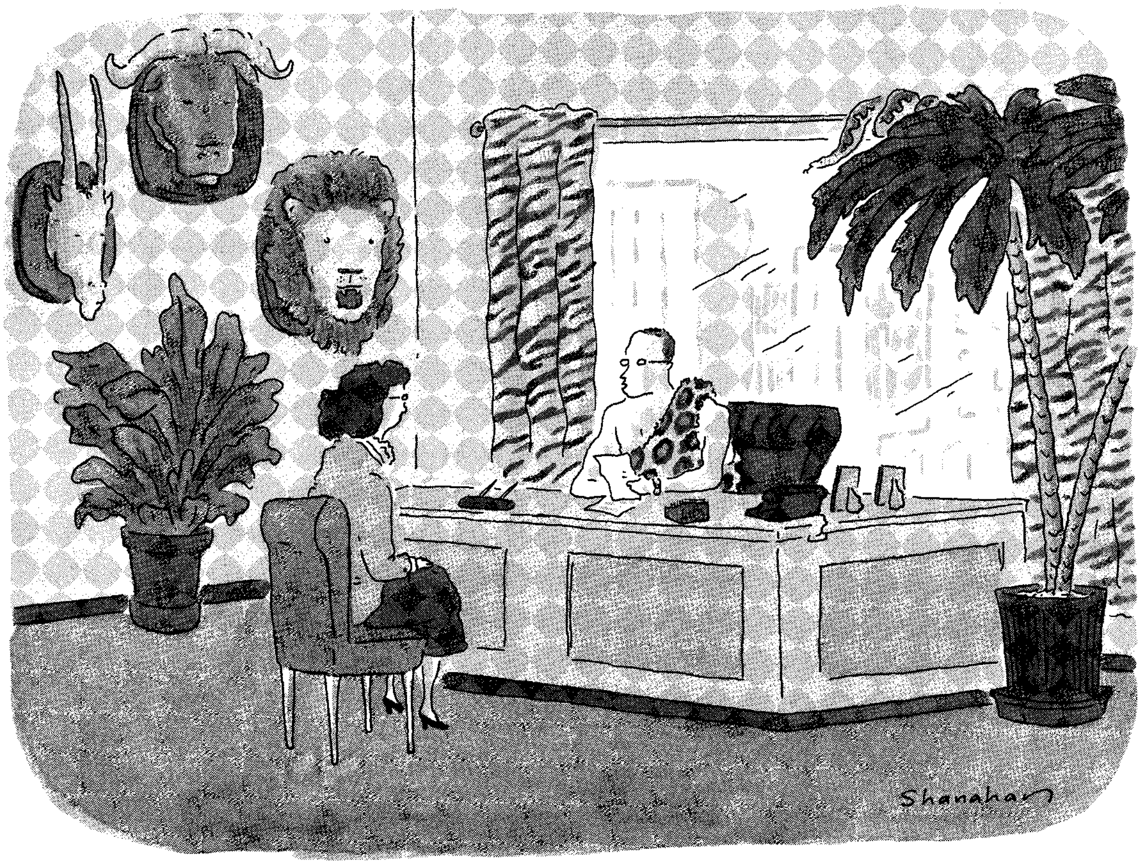
AT the end of "The Godfather Part II" (1974), the story was complete—beautifully complete. Francis Ford Coppola knew it, and for over a decade he resisted Paramount's pleas for another sequel. But the studio's blandishments became more honeyed, his piggy bank was smashed, and late in 1988 he had an illumination: he discovered how the story should be continued. Michael Corleone would be in his King Lear phase, with his empire slipping from his hands. Michael, he announced openly, without shame, was going through what he himself had been going through. In Coppola's thinking, he had become his own tragic hero. (Mario Puzo, who wrote the 1969 novel on which the films were based, and collaborated with Coppola on the screenplays, held his tongue.)

Most of the emotional force went out of Coppola's moviemaking in the late nineteen-seventies, when he was working on "Apocalypse Now," and it has never fully come back. Pictures such as "One from the Heart," "The Outsiders," "Rumble Fish," "Tucker," and "The Cotton Club" were preceded by so much buildup in the press that early audiences kept being stunned to find an empty shell of a movie. We've never had another director whose fall was so prolonged, or one who harangued the press so bitterly, blaming it for his burnout and his miscalculations. Coppola makes himself the issue. After each new film, he was so nakedly hurt and upset that you couldn't help becoming involved in his pain. (For a while, he was Tucker, the victim of the big car companies.) By now, you can't discuss his movies apart from discussing him—he's made it impossible. He blames the press for that, too.

Coppola has been licking his wounds publicly for over a decade. He's turned his exhaustion and wound-licking into the subject of "The Godfather Part III." Its emblem is the sagging face of Michael Corleone (Al Pacino), the Godfather. In the first film, Michael became a killer for the sake of his family. In "Godfather II" we saw that it wasn't family he cared about now—it was power. Predatory and vicious, he'd killed his poor weakling brother Fredo and also his sister Connie's treacherous husband. He'd *put himself beyond redemption*, and at the end he had lost his wife Kay (Diane Keaton) and was alone with his two pampered children and Connie (Talia Shire). Yet in "III" we're supposed to believe in a remorseful, basically good Michael Corleone. Twenty years have passed, and now he's trying to give his family a good name and protect his daughter Mary's innocence. (That is, he's trying to keep her in ignorance of his murderous past.) He has moved the family wealth out of gambling and into banking and investments, but the other mobsters resent his climb toward respectability, and—here's the tricky element—the higher he moves in international banking circles, the crookeder the action, and the more he is victimized. "Godfather III" is about worldwide corruption.

Trying to put the Corleone family above reproach, Michael enters into negotiations with the Vatican; it has the standing to launder his money and his name. (That seems to be his way of expiating his crimes.) Michael, it turns out, is honorable compared with the big-time grandees who deal with the Vatican. It's Michael who tries—and fails—to save the life of Pope John Paul (Raf Vallone); he is poisoned by the consortium of European financiers. (Since the movie is set in 1979 and 1980, Michael was doomed to failure; John Paul actually died in 1978.)

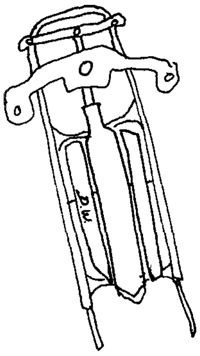
The first two "Godfather" movies are peaks in our moviegoing experience. In their combined seven and a half hours, they're our gangster epic, our immigration epic, our national passion. They belong to us. So we care about this huge, ambitious new project; watching the sequences, we pull for Coppola, worrying about whether he'll be able to bring them off. Lightning didn't strike



"How convincing are your jungle-bird calls, Ms. Haverhill?"

three times; the movie is lumbering. Yet I was relieved—I felt he could get by with it. It resembles the first two pictures, and there's always something happening. I don't think it's going to be a public humiliation, and it's too amorphous to damage our feelings about the first two.

"Godfather III" feels as if it had been ripped from Coppola's hands before he could shape it and finish it. That's probably what happened; he may have needed two or three months longer, though chances are that if he had been given a year it would still be messy. This picture isn't just unpolished and weakly scored; it lacks coherence. The internal force has vanished from his work, but you still expect some narrative flow; instead, he reaches for awesomeness. Trying to make a masterpiece, he resorts to operatic pyrotechnics that don't come out of anything.



Coppola chose to make "The Outsiders" in the style of "Gone with the Wind"; he's made "Godfather III" in the style of the earlier "Godfather" movies. But there's no connection anymore between Coppola and this style. The sensibility is different; the quality of feeling—what gave the films their lyricism and made the public bond with them—is gone.

In the first two "Godfather" pictures Coppola took opportunistic, sensationalist material and turned it into drama. In "Godfather III" you catch glimpses of news stories. Joe Mantegna, as the smooth-faced hood Joey Zasa, is like Joey Gallo dressed in John Gotti's wardrobe, and the package deals with the Vatican recall the Sindona affair. But Coppola doesn't transform the sensationalist material; he just presents it, with an aura of solemnity.

Michael now lives in a New York penthouse and buys himself the Order of St. Sebastian by donating a hundred million dollars to the Vatican to distribute to the poor of Sicily. The amounts bandied about are trashily large: he agrees to hand the Vatican six hundred million dollars more, and is swindled. These transactions illustrate why Michael can't go on as Godfather. The point appears to be that he was meant for something better. He's grieving, and you get the sense that it's not for the brother and brother-in-law he killed, or his first wife and his brother Sonny, whom others killed, or his dead parents; it's for the lost possibilities in himself. The action doesn't seem attached to anything, because Michael's passions are spent and his thoughts are elsewhere. He wants out. Coppola might be saying, "I shouldn't have to be doing this. I've already made this picture."

Al Pacino gives a good morose performance, with deep pouches under his eyes. He plays the role with fine professionalism, but it's no longer a startling role, with hidden currents that suddenly come to the surface; it's limited and monochromatic. Robert Duvall's Tom Hagen isn't around, and he's missed; Pacino has no one to play off. Michael doesn't reveal himself with the old sneak of a don who pretends to be harmless (a too effusive performance by Eli Wallach) or with his lifelong henchman Al Neri (Richard Bright); he's a silent, solitary figure, his body hunched over, his face a mask of lethargy. It's a mistake, I think, to have given him no new sex partners and left him clinging nobly to his forlorn love for his ex-wife, Kay. It's great to see Diane Keaton, but she has always seemed wasted in this poorly written role; how eons have passed, and Kay is still dropping bland moral judgments. She and everybody else keep telling Michael that they love him and forgive him—how much reassurance does Coppola need?

After Michael's son, Anthony (Franc D'Ambrosio), refuses to study law and goes off to become an opera singer, Michael takes on the training of his nephew Vincent (Andy Garcia), his brother Sonny's illegitimate son (in "King Lear," Edmund, the bastard). Sonny was a hothead; Vincent is a torpedo, a killer without guilt pangs. His speed in violence suggests a kinetic self-realization with a gun. Physically, Garcia is well cast. He has a widow's peak, and he flashes fire, or his liquid brown eyes twinkle, or he speaks with a sexy undertone. But the illusion never takes hold. Where are the scenes in which Michael would recognize that Vincent has the steel and cunning to hold power? Michael seems to turn his empire over to a loyal bodyguard. The movie appears to be saying that Michael recognizes that in this

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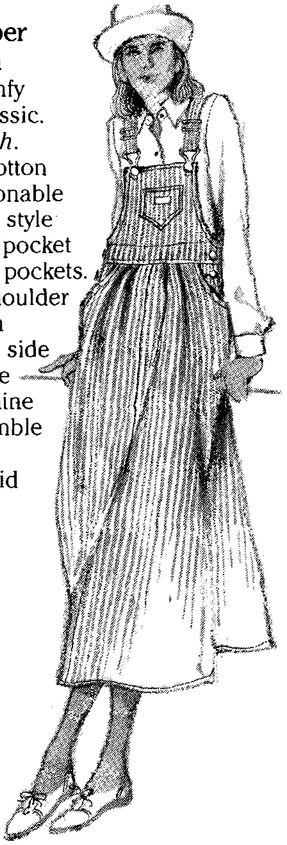

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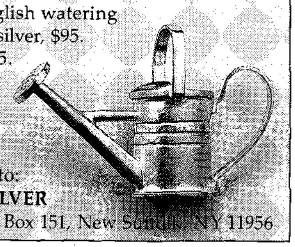

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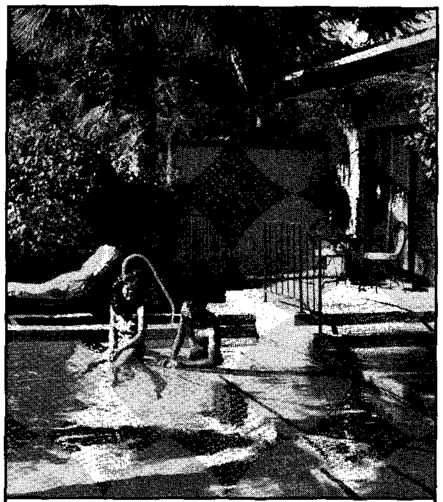

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depraved world Vincent, with his killer instincts, is the man for the job—the man that Michael now thinks he never was. Maybe that's too self-serving for Coppola to make it more explicit.

The Irish actor Donal Donnelly—he was the drunken, stuttering Freddy in "The Dead"—is perfection as the mealymouthed Vatican banker Archbishop Gilday. And as a photojournalist whose casual bedroom date with Vincent puts her in the middle of an attempted hit, the frisky Bridget Fonda has comic electricity popping out all over. As Michael's financial adviser (a replacement for Duvall), George Hamilton, *loitering in the background*, looks as if he were born encased in a stretch limo; too bad he has nothing to do. Negative publicity about the movie has centered on Coppola's daughter Sofia, who plays Michael's adored daughter, Mary. It's obvious that this teen-age girl is not a trained actress; she seems uncomfortable at times, and her voice (or a dubber's voice) lacks expressiveness—which is a serious flaw in her last scene. But she has a lovely and unusual presence; she gives the film a breath of life, and I grew to like her. (What I didn't like was that Coppola makes you feel protective toward her. And there's one layer too many when she says "Dad" at the end.)

The strongest performance—in terms of sheer animal strength and suggestions of emotional reserves—is given by Talia Shire, whose Connie calls up dark plotting women like Livia in "I, Claudius," and Lady Macbeth, and Lucrezia Borgia; she's tough. It's Connie who angles Vincent into the family; when she's fed up listening to him talk about how he wants to kill one of the Corleones' enemies, she says "Do it," and her words have the kinetic charge of his actions. Part of Connie's silent-movie witchiness is in her resemblance to Pacino's ravaged Michael, and part is in her reflective, knowing half smile. Connie acts like family: when she says, "Come *on*, Michael," it's in a gutsy, impatient voice that only she would dare to use.

Visually, "Godfather III" is disappointingly soft and dark; it's so toned in to the earlier films that it seems to belong to a brown past. (The processing must be at fault: the film looks as if it were already on TV.) The core colors of the three movies come through in the blood-red silks and velvets, burnished dark wood, and gold details of the opera-house scenes in Sicily, where Anthony makes his début as the tenor in "Cavalleria Rusticana." This Sicilian opera about La Vendetta represents where the saga of the Corleones began, when young Vito's parents were murdered. And while the music goes on, a series of assassinations is carried out—an echo of the assassinations that ended the first film. The picture might have had some fresh wit if we'd seen that now that the Corleones were in the legitimate business world they had lawyers do their dirty deeds. Instead, it's the same old bang-bang, and this time there's no horror in the bloodshed—only grandiosity. (You may not even be quite sure who's doing what, or why.) When Michael has his big scene on the steps of the opera house, with a prolonged silent scream and then an actual scream, we don't experience his agony. His later, final moment seems just an addendum, a mistake.

There's no conviction in Michael's atonement, and none in Vincent's fire, either. "Godfather III" looks like a "Godfather" movie, but it's not about revenge and it's not about passion and power and survival. It's about a battered moviemaker's king-size depression.

BRIAN DE PALMA walked right off a cliff when he made his version of the Tom Wolfe novel "The Bonfire of the Vanities." Other movies about the political circus surrounding a criminal trial (movies such as "His Girl Friday" and "Roxie Hart") encouraged us to sympathize with the innocent defendant. In the Wolfe novel—a satirical exposé of how democracy works in New York in the eighties—the rich, seemingly secure Wasp Sherman McCoy is caught in the justice system. He and his mistress, in his Mercedes, hit a young black man; as a result, pressure groups, politicians, and newspapermen are out to get him, and they break him. But if the movie allowed us to feel a natural empathy with McCoy it would violate Wolfe's deliberately heartless, mocking tone. So De Palma tries for a rollicking impersonality. Intending to use the big city as a flamboyant comedy set, he comes up with an expressionist stylization of the Preston Sturges conniption-fit comedies: exaggeratedly large rooms, high and low perspectives, and people looming in the shots. At times, the décor suggests the super-artificial scene designs in "A Clockwork Orange." It's ingenious; there's clever thinking behind it. And it's a fizzle. The movie has a shrill sprightliness; it's like a sci-fi version of a loud, overbright screwball comedy.

"Bonfire" has a throwaway quality: bizarre, glittering things go by so quickly they don't take time to salute themselves. At the beginning, there's a splendiferous view looking down on Manhattan from the wing of a gargoyle on the Chrysler Building. And then, in a showpiece tracking, Steadicam shot that goes on for five minutes, elevator doors open and close at the instant required; the precision is the gag, but it misses being really funny because it's *too* precise. It's ahead of us. All through the movie, De Palma's timing is off, as if his instincts had gone on holiday. You feel a kind of fanaticism in his directing: he's planned everything—it's an exercise in wrong-headed style.

The picture grates on your nerves: you sit there listening to Melanie Griffith's metallic whine and you watch Bruce Willis fail at the simple task of playing a comic drunk. These are talented people—what's happened to them? Just about everybody in the cast seems keyed up too high. Tom Hanks (as Sherman McCoy), Morgan Freeman, F. Murray Abraham, Kim Cattrall, John Hancock—they all seem caught in a frenzied competition to overdo everything.

Hanks has his moments. When McCoy, at his brokerage firm, stands preening, with his chest flung out, he looks fit and invulnerable—a newly hatched fool. After his arrest, his face is frozen; he smiles inappropriately—a sickly, terrified smile. But the picture slights his being put behind bars and how he's affected; the scenes are fast and hysterical, without momentum. So the central episode of the story doesn't sink in, and there's no satirical fun in McCoy's terror. We don't really get to see that all the elements in the city which he, in his smugness, has ignored—the full range of people on the make—are using him to advance their careers.

The movie has two points of view, and they don't jibe. In the final courtroom scene, Freeman, as the judge, makes a speech that shames the political operators and agitators, and brings them to their senses. The movie descends to Capraesque sincerity at this point, so we have to assume that it's the message we're to take home. But Willis, as the tabloid journalist who exploits McCoy's predicament, is the cynical narrator, and he's the winner—he profiteers on a profiteering decade. Literary prizes are lavished on his book about the case, and we're supposed to find this swine's triumph ironic and hilarious. A subway scene where he gets to know McCoy and recognizes what he's done to him has no follow-through; effective scenes with Richard Libertini, Robert Stephens, André Gregory, and Alan King don't add up to enough. Whatever one's feelings about the Wolfe novel (I disliked it), it works. Michael Cristofer's thin script doesn't; it's as if he had been hired to make the worst adaptation that could be made. And the score, by Dave Grusin, never clues you in; totally distanced from the action, it's in some tinkling world of its own.

De Palma, who showed a genius for sophomoric comedy in his youth, had already made his "Bonfire of the Vanities." It was the daring race-relations jamboree "Hi, Mom!" (1970). And he made a slapstick rock-musical "Bonfire" called "Phantom of the Paradise" (1974). You see that crazy-house bravura here in the swirling overhead shots and "Dr. Strangelove," "Touch of Evil" camerawork, in the love of visual detail, in the intricate patterning of tiles and bricks. But the story is overwhelmed by a style that's meant to be dizzyingly aggressive. What's missing is the shock and offensiveness that could give the commotion some point. The picture keeps pulling back from the true outrageousness of borderline racist humor—the only thing that could save it. That was what gave the novel its hostile charge. Without that, not only does the movie miss the target, you don't know what the target is.

—PAULINE KAEL

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[*From the Oberlin Alumni Magazine*]

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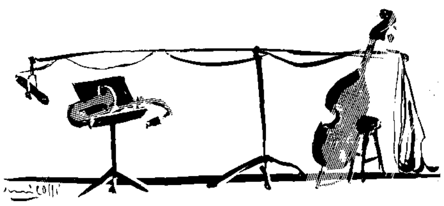
MUSICAL EVENTS

Struggling with Ruthless Destiny

THE list of composers ardently admired by a few people and ignored by the public at large is long. Busoni—given the elasticity of "a few" and "at large"—is perhaps prominent on it, even if his "Doktor Faust" seems about to join the repertory at last. Janáček was on it until the advocacy of champions in a position to give practical form to their admiration—conductors, directors of opera companies, a few critics in support—brought the greatness of his music before international audiences. Sometimes a previously obscure composer is borne forward on a wave of fashion that then recedes. In 1978, the LaSalle Quartet's recording of Zemlinsky's Second String Quartet revealed a work so striking and beautiful that interest was kindled in someone whom Schoenberg, Zemlinsky's pupil and brother-in-law, had called "a great composer," and many Zemlinsky performances and recordings followed. There are now at least three operas on disk, and much else. But although Zemlinsky's Lyric Symphony proved worth hearing once or twice, and the operas proved not without merit, the explorations, I think, turned up nothing quite on the level of the Second Quartet.

Recordings are the new recourse of an advocate seeking to win admirers for his favorite by the evidence of what reaches their ears. With the advent of the long-playing record, forty years ago, the repertory available for active hearing became large, and in our era of the compact disk it is larger still. Not only the music of earlier centuries is being explored. Knowledge of Fauré's lovely "Pénélope" (1913) is no longer confined to those within reach of the few companies that have staged it; there is a recording with Jessye Norman as the heroine. Dukas's "Ariane et Barbe-Bleue" (1907), unheard at the Met since 1912, is recorded with Katherine Ciesinski and Gabriel Bacquier in the title roles. And there are even rarer operas from the fecund years of and after "Pelléas": Chausson's "Le Roi Arthus" (1903); Albéric Magnard's "Guercoeur" (composed in 1900 but performed only in 1931), with José van Dam and Hildegard Behrens; Roussel's "Padmâvatî" (1923), with Marilyn Horne; Enescu's "Oedipe" (1936). Magnard, who was born in 1865 (the same year as Sibelius and Dukas), who studied with Massenet and then with d'Indy, and who died in 1914 when invading Germans, at whom he shot, set fire to his country house, is a strange, proud, isolated figure. His music, cherished by a few connoisseurs but seldom performed, is now readily available: the conductor Michel Plasson, his champion, has recorded not only "Guercoeur" but also three of his symphonies. Enescu is a composer better known than Magnard, but known mainly for his dashing Romanian Rhapsodies, which represent him as partially as Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies represent Liszt. His practical champion is Lawrence Foster, who, with the Monte Carlo Philharmonic, has recorded not only "Oedipe" but also much of the orchestral music.

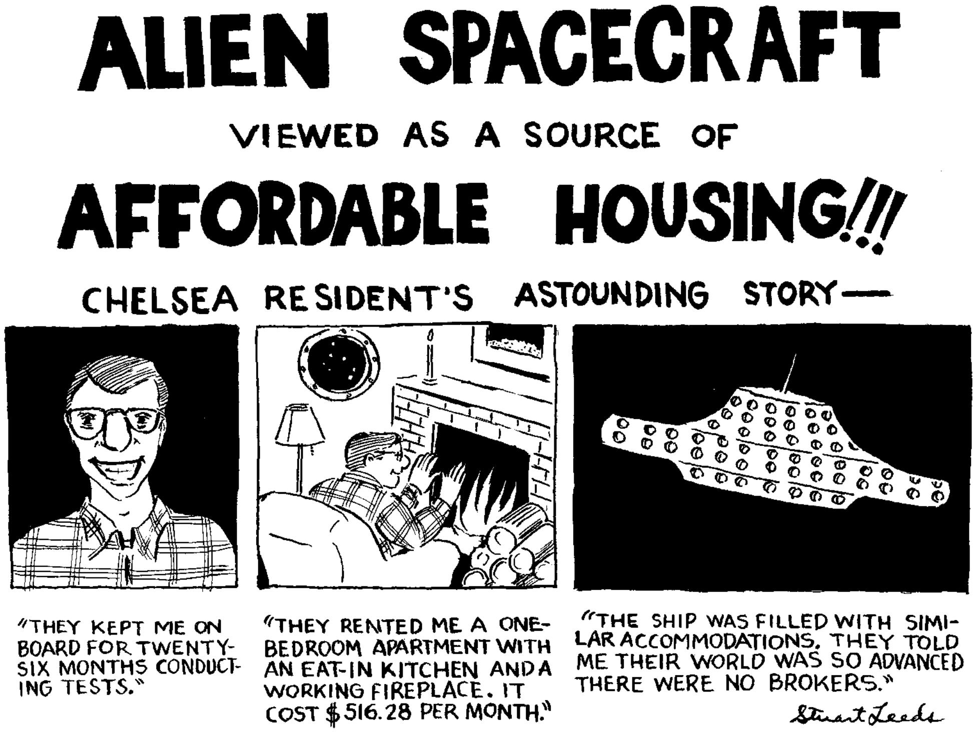
ENESCU (or Enesco, as he called himself in Paris)—violinist, composer, conductor, and pianist—was born in 1881, in a Romanian hamlet that now bears his name, and died, in Paris, in 1955. Between the ages of seven and thirteen, he studied in Vienna and got to know Brahms. Then he went to the Paris Conservatoire, where Massenet and then Fauré were his composition teachers. His Romanian Poem, Opus 1 (which Mr. Foster has recorded), was played at the Colonne concerts in 1898, when he was seventeen; later that year, he conducted it in Bucharest. The same year, he played his First Violin Sonata, Opus 2, with Alfred Cortot as the pianist; two years later, he was the pianist when Jacques Thibaud introduced his Second Violin Sonata. As a conductor—he called the baton "a 'liberated' bow"—he brought Wagner and Berlioz and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony to Bucharest. But his worldly career was as a great violinist. On the point of writing that performing art is ephemeral, I hesitate—since Enescu made records both as a violinist and as a conductor, and records last. (That is why they are called records.) So let me put it another way: Great performances matter, but great composition matters more, and Enescu the violinist-conductor-composer spent time on performance—as Busoni the pianist-composer spent time and as Boulez the conductor-composer spends time—that we might wish he had spent on creation. His worklist is short. (The Third Piano Sonata, Opus 24, No. 3, was recorded by his countryman Dinu Lipatti.) He was also a famous teacher. Yehudi Menuhin, Ivry Gitlis, Christian Ferras, and Arthur Grumiaux are among his pupils. He is not yet a famous composer. But last week I quoted Michael Steinberg's declaration that Enescu's "Oedipe" is "one of the great operas of our century." Harry Halbreich, in an essay accompanying the new recording, calls it "a supreme masterpiece in the history of opera" and "one of the peaks of twentieth-century music . . . among a handful of works that are to be reckoned on a par with 'Pelléas,' 'Wozzeck,' 'Lulu' or 'Die Soldaten.' "



FROM Aristotle onward, "Oedipus Rex" has been admired as the best-constructed of tragedies. Vicenza's Teatro Olimpico was inaugurated, in 1585, with a production of the play—twenty centuries after its première—that had music by Andrea Gabrieli. And Oedipus, usually as king but sometimes at Colonus, has been the hero of many operas. For six years, Varèse worked on an "Oedipus und die Sphinx," after Hofmannsthal's play. In 1920, Leoncavallo's last opera, an "Edipo Re," was given in Chicago, and the next year, for a single performance, in New York. The protagonist was Titta Ruffo, a powerful theatrical presence, and it is easy to imagine that he was imposing. (In his immodest memoirs, "La Mia Parabola," the baritone tells us that although critics condemned the score they admired its execution, and that "the musical conception of the protagonist corresponds perfectly to the power of Sophocles' tragedy, as was the composer's intention, who sought to re-create Oedipus with the elements, so to speak, of my personality and my voice.") Carl Orff's "Oedipus der Tyrann" appeared in 1959. Two recent Oedipus operas are

Wolfgang Rihm's "Oedipus," which had its première, in Berlin, in 1987 and is due in Santa Fe this summer; and Mark-Anthony Turnage's "Greek," which was produced in 1988, in Munich, and has been played in Edinburgh and London and on BBC television. "Greek," based on Steven Berkoff's play, is a modern "Oedipus Rex" with a defiant happy ending. Eddy interrupts the mourning with:

> Bollocks to all that! I'd rather run all the way back and pull back the sheets, witness gold-bodied wife, and climb into her sanctuary, climb all the way in, right up to my head, and hide away there and be safe and comforted. . . .Yeaah, I wanna climb back inside my Mum, what's wrong with that?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Stuart Leeds

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So far, only two Oedipus operas have achieved a decades-long record of international performance. One, of course, is Stravinsky's "Oedipus Rex," which was first heard in 1927 and is still going strong. The other is Antonio Sacchini's "Oedipe à Colone," which, after a Versailles première, was put on at the Opéra in 1787 and held the boards there until 1844, receiving nearly six hundred performances; it was also played all over Europe, from Antwerp to St. Petersburg, from Stockholm and Copenhagen to Naples. Berlioz admired it; he got a job as a chorister after singing one of its arias, and at the Opéra "the lovely trio 'Ô doux moments' " once moved him to an ecstasy of sympathetic grief.

Enescu, wanting to compose an opera, found his subject when, in 1909, he saw a Comédie-Française production of "Oedipus Rex," with Mounet-Sully in the title role. He obtained the first draft of a libretto by Edmond Fleg—the librettist of Bloch's "Macbeth" (1910)—in 1913, but long years passed before he embarked in earnest on its composition. The opera was written mainly in 1921 and 1922; the scoring was completed only in 1931 and was then further revised. "Oedipe" reached the stage of the Opéra in March, 1936; that season and the next, it received eleven performances in all. Its subsequent history is swiftly told: a French Radio memorial revival soon after Enescu's death; a Brussels production (with Rita Gorr) in 1956; a Bucharest production (in Romanian translation) in 1958, which was maintained, visited Paris in 1963, and was recorded in 1966; and, from 1960 on, a few German productions. I have not seen "Oedipe" on the stage. Many years ago, in a country house where Janáček, long before his worldwide recognition, and Busoni, Magnard, and Enescu were cherished, I heard the rough Romanian recording of "Oedipe," was fascinated, and determined one day to make a fuller acquaintance with the piece. The admirable new recording (on EMI) and the Christmas lull in New York's nightly music activity—who cares about "Andrea Chénier" when Enescu's "Oedipe" beckons?—provided the opportunity.

"Oedipe" is an opera in four acts that spans the whole of its hero's life. In Act I, he is a newborn infant. The birth of an heir is celebrated with ceremonies; the local shepherds' homage to the royal child adds a ritual resonance. But then Tiresias pronounces the prophecy—the child is destined to kill his father, wed his mother, and become his daughters' brother—and the curtain falls as Laius, who has ordered the Shepherd to dispose of the fated child, and Jocasta move toward one another, sobbing. Thereafter, the singer of Oedipus is onstage almost throughout. (La Roche, the impresario of Richard Strauss's "Capriccio," is commonly reckoned the most extensive of all one-evening baritone roles. I suspect, without having essayed a bar count, that the vocal demands on Enescu's Oedipus are even greater; the dramatic demands certainly are.) Act II has three scenes. In the first of them, Oedipus, grown to young manhood in Corinth, resolves to leave the city: from Apollo's oracle at Delphi he has learned of the prophecy; his parting from Queen Merope, whom he believes to be his mother, is moving. In the second scene, at the trivium, lonely wanderer, he curses Destiny, lifts high his club against it—and Laius' chariot whirls across his path. In the third scene, he encounters the Sphinx. Her riddle in this version is "Name someone or name something that is greater [*plus grand*] than Destiny." And Oedipus answers, "Man! man! Man is stronger [*plus fort*] than Destiny!" The answer evidently suffices: the Sphinx, half mocking, half in anguish, expires. But in that *grand/fort* opposition something more than a French poet's wordplay, something mysterious and moving is intended. Act III is "Oedipus Rex," and Act IV is "Oedipus at Colonus."

Is the work "one of the great operas of our century," "a supreme masterpiece"? For two acts I was inclined to believe it. The music is hard to de-

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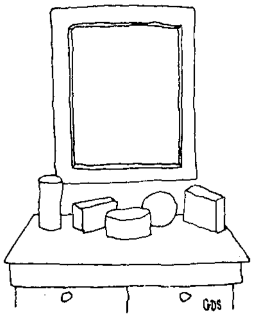
scribe. This is what the well-known critic Emile Vuillermoz wrote in 1936:

> Enesco is influenced not by Wagner, nor Debussy, nor Stravinsky, nor Richard Strauss, nor Ravel. He is a potent fountain of pure music boiling forth in never-failing fashion, without affectations, without preconceived ideas, without artistic theories. This music is of no epoch and in no style. It is simply music; that is never in doubt.

The prelude is sombre, imposing, built largely on a dark, powerful descending theme associated with Destiny and a broad, open, expansive theme proclaiming Man's victory. Other motifs appear in the densely woven, but not sonically thick, music; later we learn to associate them with parricide, with Jocasta, with the Sphinx. The most striking of all is the shepherd piping, a remarkable invention—folk-inspired, chromatic, direct in its play on a listener's emotions. Through the opera, it recurs in various forms, and whenever it does it places the drama of the great ones in a "timeless" landscape, in a context of life that continues though rulers come and go. The ceremonies of the first act move without haste. Women, warriors, shepherds sing. There is dancing. The sounds are strange, new, beautiful—colored by the irregular rhythms and exotic scales of Romanian folk music. Jocasta and Laius croon fondly over their child, destined for so glorious a future, and a heavy sigh breaks from the blind Tiresias. He pronounces the dread prophecy.



Act II begins, in Corinth, with another depiction of worldly happiness: from offstage, the languorous songs of the festival of Adonis and Aphrodite are heard. But onstage, in the palace, Oedipus, newly returned from Delphi, broods on what he learned there. Thereafter, all the action is outdoor. The trivium scene begins with a poignant, beautifully composed, Berliozian duet for bassoon, in the pit, and, onstage, the Shepherd's flute; Oedipus enters with a dark monologue. He enters the next scene with a sad song, first heard from the distance, and chromatically reinflected on repetitions of the refrain: "Happy he who dies on the day of his birth, Thrice happy he who dies before he is born." The Sphinx is a wide-ranging mezzo, and her music is very powerful, if perhaps a shade melodramatic as she expires in peals of hysterical laughter mingled with desperate sobs; her final shriek is continued upward by the eerie twang of a musical saw. The people of Thebes hail the hero who has destroyed the monster; Jocasta advances toward the new king; but the shepherd piping takes on a note of menace.

Thus far, the score seems to me inspired. Enescu composes with extraordinary freedom and directness. His music combines the gravity of Fauré with the wildness of Bartók at his wildest. He captures the directness, the raw power of folk music as in their different ways Haydn, Brahms, Bartók, Vaughan Williams did. There is no whiff of conservatory industriousness. The underlying mastery of harmonic movement seems instinctive. (The opera begins in G minor and ends in G major.) The erratic rhythms, the sharp-cut scoring, the vocal notation with its frequent slides, abundant, flickering grace notes, and occasional quarter-tone inflections seem natural, inevitable.

But the flame of inspiration burns lower, I think, in Act III, "Oedipus Rex," when the argy-bargy of Oedipus, Tiresias, and Creon is resolved into short-breathed, somewhat conventional, sometimes even commonplace musical gestures. Jocasta's entry—after Stravinsky one thinks of it as "Nonne erubescite, reges?"—is very striking, but in the subsequent duet for her and Oedipus, woven with solo string writing, there is a lushness to remind us that Enescu was once Massenet's pupil. An offstage naturalistic scream of "Horreur! Horreur! Jocaste s'est tuée!" recalls "Cavalleria Rusticana" ("Hanno ammazzato compare Turiddu!"). When the blinded Oedipus appears, he declaims in an emphatic, measured Sprechgesang that sounds like a parody of old-style Comédie-Française Racine. (I have thrilled to Marie Bell's Phèdre and love Sarah Bernhardt's records; but in this direct "Oedipe" the mannered delivery strikes a jarring period note.) When Antigone joins her father-brother, he returns to song, and Enescu finds inspiration again.

The last act, "Oedipus at Colonus," begins beautifully, with four horns, two open and two bouchés, sounding in heterophony. The Athenian elders hymn the sacred grove in a kind of modern organum that is "timeless" music, touching on the mysteries of music's expressive power. The act—Oedipus' quietly confident, fervent assertions that, although sullied by the workings of Destiny, he himself is guiltless—is beautiful. (There is an angry central scherzo at Creon's intervention; Fleg omits that of Polynices.) But sometimes, I think, the music becomes sentimental, too dreamily lush, almost soupy. The finale is a new Good Friday Music, "Parsifal"-aspirant, as Oedipus, amid scenic transformations, moves to his rest in the nightingale-haunted, Eumenides-blest grove. After what has gone before, it is somewhat conventional "apotheosis" music.

What the music conveys, throughout, is a sense of real things happening to real people in real places, in a landscape that has changed little from Oedipus' and Sophocles' day to ours. I happen to know that trivium, but even if I didn't the score would make it vivid. In Enescu's music, the scenes take shape before a listener to the recording. And it seems likely that a theatrical incarnation might diminish the composer's vision of that landscape, reduce it to painted canvases within a theatre. (The 1936 critics found the Opéra inscenation unworthy.) So I won't urge "Oedipe" on the Met but do urge attention to the recording—obtainable for much less than the price of a Met ticket, free if one borrows it from a library—on anyone interested in the Oedipus complex, in music's power, in a great, naturally endowed composer's combination of "primal," directly affective (i.e., folk) music with the eloquent arguments and long-scale admonitions—motivic, harmonic, and structural—of developed Western art.

The Oedipus of the recording is José van Dam—sensitive, acute, and wholly satisfactory. Barbara Hendricks is an exquisite Antigone. Brigitte Fassbaender, the Jocasta, pushes rather too hard, and so does Marjana Lipovšek, the Sphinx, but both are impressive. And for the rest there is a pretty well all-star cast, including Bacquier as Tiresias, Nicolai Gedda as the Shepherd, John Aler as Laius, and Gino Quilico as Theseus.

—ANDREW PORTER

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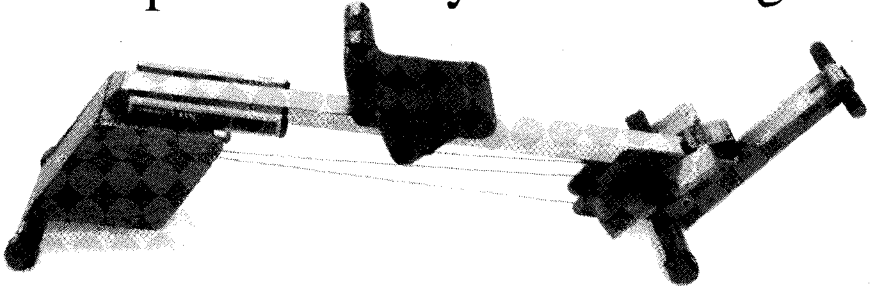

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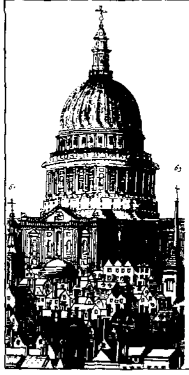

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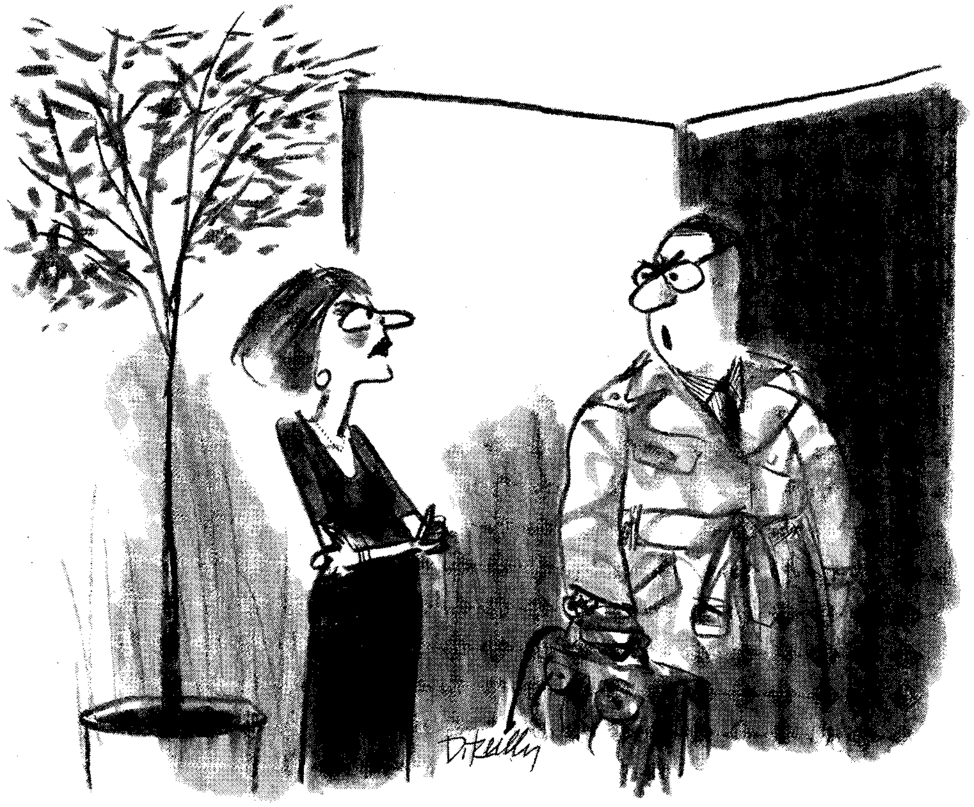
REPORT FROM MOSCOW

EVEN before the year-end session of the Congress of People's Deputies, Moscow was suffering a dreary and difficult December. Temperatures dropped just far enough to chill, but not enough to maintain a clean cover of snow. Instead, the snow and sleet melted and mixed with dirt in the streets to form a dark-gray slop that spattered everyone's shoes, clothing, and mood. Gloomy portents abounded. Moscow has rapidly become one of those cities where foreign cigarettes are an alternative currency, and from September to December the ruble fell against the pack of Marlboros by about a hundred per cent. Reports of an impending famine have probably been exaggerated; Russians have long been accustomed to supplementing what they can buy in the stores with vegetables from their summer gardens or with special packages distributed at work or with donations from relatives down on the farm, and those sources continue to exist. But Muscovites were worried enough to form long, sombre lines outside the grocery stores, waiting to get in and exchange their ration cards for whatever butter or sugar or sausage happened to be available. The spectacle of their leaders begging for aid from the West evoked more shame than consolation.

At times, the only tangible product of *perestroika* seemed to be the proliferation of plenums and congresses and sessions and conferences that kept the Soviet political class indoors and warm. But the news from those meetings encouraged only conservatives. At the Communist Party Central Committee's November plenum, speech after shrill speech from provincial representatives had demanded that the central authorities do something to repress the separatists. Then, in December, President Gorbachev dismissed the man in charge of the nation's police, Vadim Bakatin, and replaced him with Boris Pugo, an apparatchik whose previous career had involved keeping the lid on the republic of Latvia. The director of the K.G.B., Vladimir Kryuchkov, appeared on television and stated that letters were flowing into the security apparatus with "urgent demands for decisive actions to defend the law and maintain order." He promised that the K.G.B. would not let those petitioners down. A couple of weeks later, he accused the West of trying to sell the Soviets contaminated grain, and sounded a theme that echoed Stalin's xenophobia: "There are attempts from abroad to exert overt and covert pressure on the Soviet Union and to impose doubtful ideas."

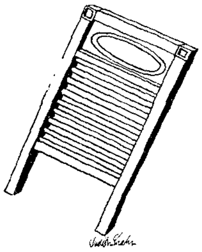
The Congress of People's Deputies, meeting in the Kremlin, had barely opened when Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, a member of Mikhail Gorbachev's inner circle from the inception of *perestroika*, abruptly announced his resignation. His face flushed, Shevardnadze left his colleagues with a warning that the country might be headed for dictatorship. Most of the people with whom I spoke suggested that both the style of Shevardnadze's resignation and his motive for leaving were entangled in his roots, in Georgia. Georgians are, by reputation, impulsive and emotional people. More to the point, Georgia recently elected a very aggressive, nationalist government, which has demonstrated both its intent to make Georgia independent and its intolerance of separatist movements among the smaller nationalities that live in the republic. As such, Georgia is a prime candidate for a reassertion of Moscow's authority—something that would likely involve bloodshed. Shevardnadze, it was said, foresaw a crackdown and wanted no part of it. Shevardnadze himself, in an interview with *Moscow News* on January 2nd, agreed that the possibility of violent repression of the republics had prompted him to resign. Sending troops into a republic, he predicted, would solve nothing, and would undermine the new, constructive relationship with the West which he has spent the past five years building. And he repeated his warning: "If the country isn't able to break out of the crisis, then dictatorship is unavoidable."

Gorbachev, the only apparent pretender to the dictatorship Shevardnadze warned about, seemed genuinely shocked by the resignation. When he spoke to the Congress, he said that he had considered naming Shevardnadze his vice-president. So it was all the more surprising when, a few days later, Gorbachev nominated not a reformer from one of the minority republics, like Shevardnadze, but a Russian apparatchik named Gennadi Yanayev, who has spent most of his career in the Communist Youth League and the



"You needn't bother. I've already erased the wedding video."

trade-union organization, neither of which is a bastion of new thinking. Even the Congress, which was loaded from the beginning with government and Communist Party loyalists, found Yanayev hard to accept: although no one ran against him, he needed two ballots to achieve the required majority. The most favorable evaluation of Yanayev that I heard came from Roy Medvedev, the anti-Stalinist historian, who has recently become a member of the Party's Central Committee and is a staunch Gorbachev supporter. "He's not very well known," Medvedev said, "but he's devoted to Gorbachev, and Gorbachev wanted someone who would listen to him, rather than someone who might be independent."



Shevardnadze's resignation, Yanayev's election, and Kryuchkov's speeches all contributed to the sense that Soviet politics had veered off in a new direction. In the conversations I had with friends and acquaintances before and during the Congress, it was taken for granted that the country was entering a period of reaction; some of them went a step further and predicted that the revolution Gorbachev had launched five years ago would soon reach its Thermidor.

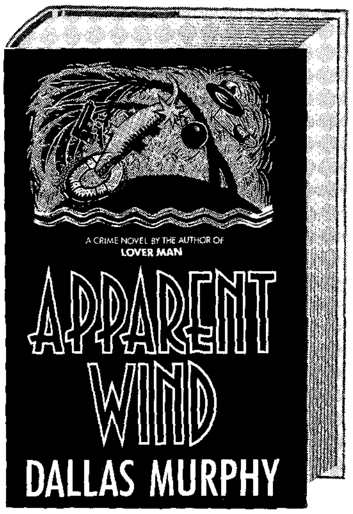
For a couple of years, at least, the Russians have viewed Gorbachev a good deal more skeptically than the West has, so it was not surprising to hear criticism. In the past, though, the criticism had generally been accompanied by a feeling that Gorbachev was moving, however erratically, in the right direction, and might eventually lead his country out of its morass. This winter, I heard more and more often opinions that regretfully described the Gorbachev era as a historical failure, one of those flashes of reform in Russian history which have been followed by long periods of conservative retrenchment. Gorbachev had failed, people told me, because of his mistakes in foreign policy, in economic policy, and in policy toward the Soviet Union's minority nationalities—mistakes that had led to a situation in which the populace yearned for order.

Few reform advocates blamed him for those mistakes. They felt he committed them out of ignorance—an ignorance all but guaranteed by the system he had inherited. "He made many mistakes because he had no good information about the real situation in the country," Dr. Nodari Simonia, the deputy director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, in Moscow, told me. "He was part of a system in which everyone was a little isolated from real and necessary information. And his knowledge was further limited because he grew up on Stalinist science." But, while the reformers could forgive Gorbachev for his mistakes, few thought that conservative forces in the country would be so understanding.

Dr. Aleksandr Tsipko, of Moscow's Institute for International Economic and Political Studies, spent most of the last decade involved with Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe. He was a visiting scholar in Poland during the rise of Solidarity. In 1980, he wrote a long report suggesting that the Polish Communists and their system could not survive. He sent the report to Oleg Bogomolov, his superior, and he believes that it was read by some mid-level officials in the Central Committee, which was then headed by Leonid Brezhnev. "They told Bogomolov, 'He's right, but hide the report,' " Tsipko recalled when I spoke with him. "I don't think Brezhnev or Gromyko ever read what I wrote." At that time, the Soviet leadership was intent on propping up the old structures—an aim that was to be achieved in Poland by the imposition of martial law. "Because my views contradicted the official view, I was forbidden to have anything to do with Poland after I returned," Tsipko said. His doctorate was held up for several years.

After the transition from Brezhnev to Gorbachev, Tsipko's status improved. In December, 1986, he was invited by one of Gorbachev's advisers, Georgi Shakhnazarov, to join the Central Committee department on relations with Eastern Europe. He found that the generation that had recognized the wisdom of his report but had been afraid to show it to the leadership was now in charge, and the old strictures against speaking the truth were gone. But the legacy of several generations of intellectual repression could not be quickly dispelled. In retrospect, Tsipko

A POCKET FULL OF CRIME



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—Donald Westlake

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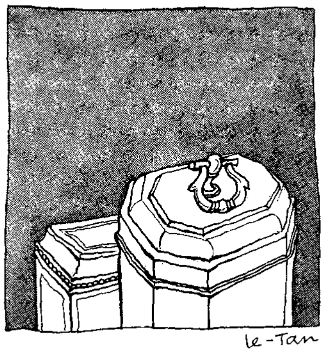
said, the leadership in the early Gorbachev years knew precious little about the real state of affairs in Eastern Europe. Gorbachev, Shakhnazarov, and the other Central Committee experts believed that Afghanistan had demonstrated that "it was immoral to repress these people"—the Eastern Europeans—"and to force them to live as we did," Tsipko recalled. The new Soviet leaders arrived at a moral decision to respect the rights of the Eastern Europeans to determine their own policies. But they did not anticipate the consequences of that decision.



"There was an illusion that free Communist parties would have sufficient authority to control events," Tsipko said. "I believed that if you got rid of the conservative leadership in those parties and moved away from traditional, orthodox Communism those ruling parties could win over the intelligentsia and strengthen their positions. Not only I believed it. The liberals in the Eastern European Communist parties believed it. Gorbachev believed it. A whole lot of people believed it." He stopped speaking and half laughed, half snorted at the memory of this misconception.

I found no one in Moscow who believed that it would have been advisable, or feasible, to intervene forcefully to preserve Communist rule in Eastern Europe, but I did find people who felt that Gorbachev and Shevardnadze had failed to arrange an orderly retreat, had lost all control of the process, and, in the end, had made concessions that humiliated the Soviet Army and permitted the creation of a potentially threatening unified Germany that remained in NATO. And the conservatives were calling Gorbachev to account for that.

CRITICS of all kinds also held Gorbachev accountable for the country's economic mess, which, like the rout in Eastern Europe, they said, owed something to the fundamental ignorance of the Soviet leadership. Some top economists, among them Stanislav Shatalin, the author of the Five-Hundred-Day Plan for making the transition to a market economy, freely acknowledge that the years of imposed Marxist orthodoxy gravely damaged the science of economics in the Soviet Union, and that when Gorbachev and his advisers decided on a program of "market reforms" there were few people in the country who knew what that meant. This lack of experts, along with a certain political timidity, has led to a series of sporadic reforms that have failed to confront the fact that in a market economy prices long subsidized by the state will have to rise sharply.

I dropped in one afternoon on one of the people here who have prospered under Gorbachev—a man named Vakhtang Makharadze. He is a young, energetic Georgian who runs an enterprise called Interferma out of an elegantly furnished suite that occupies much of the second floor of Moscow's old Peking Hotel. Makharadze possesses in abundance precisely the kind of entrepreneurial imagination that *perestroika* was supposed to unleash. He was a partner in the venture that created a fad for Soviet bread in Bloomingdale's last year. His firm made itself a success by such stratagems as going out into the Russian countryside, where apples were being fed to the pigs, because there was no one to collect them and transport them; buying the apples for two rubles a kilo; shipping them to Vietnam, where there were no apples; and trading them for bananas, which it brought back to Moscow and sold for six dollars a kilo to the city's foreign community. But Makharadze has thus far had no luck in putting food on Russian tables.

"In 1987, when the law on coöperatives was passed, I knew I had to work on something of my own," he told me. "I was tired of the bureaucracy where I was working. So I started a coöperative with my sister and her husband and fifteen thousand rubles we had from the sale of a family house in Georgia. It was still unthinkable that they'd give me land, but they rented me a feedlot on a farm outside Moscow to raise steers and pigs. I found that you could raise some food but there was nothing you could do with it afterward. The state meat-processing factory paid only two rubles and fifty kopecks per kilo, live weight, and it cost five rubles just for the feed required to produce that kilo of meat, not to mention the electricity, and so on. It was a one-hundred-per-cent loss on each kilo. I lost twenty-eight thousand rubles. There was no place else to sell it, unless I wanted to sell it in the peasants' market or make shish kebabs, and I didn't want to do that. I just wanted a farm business. But our structure didn't permit it, and still doesn't."

Makharadze would have gone under had he not started a joint venture with a German partner, who provided fresh capital and launched him in the business of selling food to foreigners. When I spoke to him, he had plans for creating a network of small farms, food-processing factories, and grocery stores which would bypass the state apparatus entirely. But while we were talking he took a phone call and for a few moments shouted angrily into the receiver. Local officials in the district where his farm network was to be established were balking, it appeared, at breaking up state farms and turning the land over to individuals. That was not surprising. At its December session, the Russian federation parliament passed a law permitting private land-ownership, but at a Party plenum held a few days earlier Gorbachev had rejected the same idea. No one knew whose writ extended where. Five years of *perestroika* had brought only disorganization to the countryside.

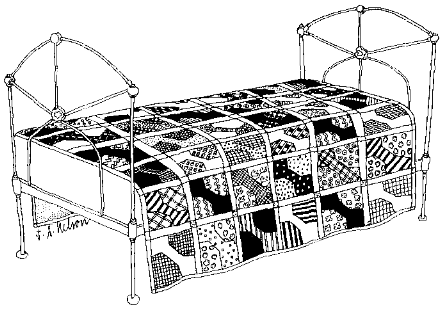
"We had a huge harvest in the country this year," Makharadze went on. "Even so, we're buying grain all over. So much perished—particularly the vegetables. It used to be that the Party would order students into the fields for a couple of weeks to pick potatoes. It would order enterprises to lend workers and trucks to help get the crops in. This year, no one paid attention to those orders. Everything rotted in the fields. It's because of a structure that doesn't have a full chain from farm to market, with incentives. I'm a supporter of Gorbachev. All my success is due to his beginning *perestroika*. Otherwise, I'd get fifteen years in jail for what I'm doing. But as long as the system pays only trifles for produce, the situation will get worse."

Even in those markets where the state apparatus has not stifled production, reform has not worked as Gorbachev intended. All too often, cartels have emerged to replace the state. The Moscow taxi market serves as an example. For the past year or so, taxi-drivers have been able to ask for hard currency from foreigners staying in Moscow hotels, and a rough fare structure has emerged: from three to five dollars for trips within the center of town, ten or fifteen dollars to the airports. By Soviet standards, those are enormous sums. On the black market, ten dollars will bring about two hundred rubles, which is close to the average factory worker's monthly salary. In a free market, the high fares would attract more drivers, and the price would come down. But in Moscow the market at each hotel and airport is controlled by a small group of drivers. When I asked a driver one day how he and his friends would react if a new driver tried to work at "their" hotel, he replied, simply, "We'd beat him up."

The state, however, has not responded to the emergence of the cartels—"mafias," as the Russians call them—by enforcing the right of newcomers to enter the market and compete. Instead, it has attacked the high profits that the cartels earn, and, in many cases, has ordered them out of business. One of Gorbachev's latest moves was to ask the K.G.B. to help in this battle. Kryuchkov, in his television address, promised war against "the interests of organized crime, dealers of the shadow economy, who are literally making thousands of millions of deficit rubles."

Neither the loss of Eastern Europe nor the chaos in the economy threatens Gorbachev as much as the separatist crisis within the Soviet Union itself. None of his critics can credibly suggest that they know how to make the economy productive overnight, and none can suggest, short of war, a way to hold on to Eastern Europe. But they can and do insist that Gorbachev can preserve the union just by having the will to do so and by enforcing the law. As he did with his policy toward Eastern Europe, Gorbachev seems to have originally settled on his domestic policies for moral and philosophical reasons, without a complete understanding of the realities he faced. Just as he did not anticipate that a policy of nonintervention would lead immediately to the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, he did not realize that *glasnost* and democratization would lead inevitably to strong separatist movements in the Soviet republics. Perhaps he believed the propaganda line he had heard since boyhood—that the Soviet Union had resolved its nationalities question. Once the separatist movements arose, Gorbachev temporized, pleading with Russian conservatives not to panic and with the separatists to go slowly. As a result, he has failed to satisfy either group. His latest effort, a treaty that tries to define the powers of the central government and the republics, might have appeased some of the separatists a year or two ago. "Now it's just another compromise that won't work," a Moscow economist told me.

After a year in which thousands of Russians fled from pogroms in Azerbaijan, and Russian minorities in the Baltic republics and Moldavia were ever more loudly and tendentiously warning that their rights were threatened by separatists, there are signs that the patience of many Russians is running out. "Three or four months ago, the public was a lot more ready to afford the republics the right to leave than it is now," Aleksandr Tsipko told me. "Right now, there has been a sharp shift. And it's caused by the threat that if the Soviet Union dissolves, Russia will have to take in millions of refugees. There are twenty-six million Russians living out there in the republics, and there are maybe twenty million mixed marriages. So, suddenly, there has appeared a desire to preserve everything as it was, and it has permeated the Russian population very strongly, particularly in the Army." The liberal Russian reformers who still take the position that at least some of the republics were wrongfully annexed and should be set free have lost touch with the popular mood, Tsipko said, with a note of sadness and resignation in his voice. "They are people of the cities and of the institutes, and they have no idea what Russia is," he explained. "To have an idea, they would have had to grow up in a village—or at least have relatives and roots there. They have no idea of the movement in the psychology of the average people."



A year or so ago, I said, I had found a strong consensus in Moscow that the use of military force would solve nothing in the republics. Did that consensus still exist?

"I don't know," Tsipko said. "But I don't have any faith that there won't be tanks."

ONE thing that Gorbachev plainly did understand very well in 1985 was the achievement and preservation of power within the Communist Party. For the past five years, he has consistently and brilliantly outmaneuvered the conservatives within the Party, pushing some of them into retirement and appeasing others with occasional conservative rhetoric, which was generally followed by reform policies. But in the electoral politics that have emerged over the last two years as a result of those reforms he has been less adroit. In the republics, the progressive constituencies have quickly evolved from pro-*perestroika* to pro-independence, putting themselves at odds with Gorbachev. Within Russia itself, many of the progressives who once fervently backed Gorbachev have gone over to the side of Boris Yeltsin. Since Gorbachev never saw fit to run for election himself and attain a popular mandate, he has left himself with nowhere to turn for political support except to conservative institutions like the Army, the Party *nomenklatura*, and the K.G.B.

The recent turn of events has elated the conservatives, who sense that the political tide has shifted in their direction after five years of frustration. I spoke with one of them, Anatoly Salutsky, a writer, one cold, damp morning in the Kremlin. Salutsky is a secretary in the Russian branch of the Writers' Union and helped the former Politburo member Yegor Ligachev prepare his memoirs for publication. Ligachev, like Gorbachev, was a protégé of Yuri Andropov; in 1983, he came to Moscow and the Politburo from Siberia with a reputation as a disciplinarian and a foe of corruption. At first, he and Gorbachev were allies against the old Brezhnev clique, and Ligachev was the informal "second secretary" in the Politburo. But they quickly developed differences as *perestroika* grew too radical for Ligachev's tastes. Gorbachev very gradually squeezed Ligachev out; the process ended when the Party Congress last year did not reëlect him to the

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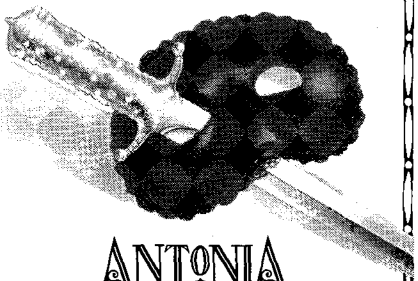

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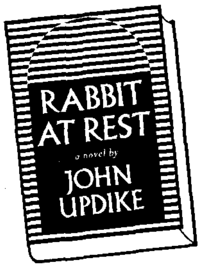

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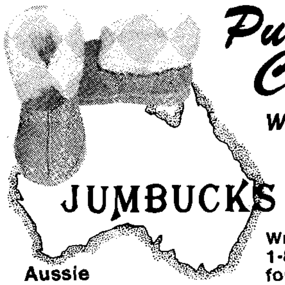

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Central Committee, leaving him only a fragile connection to power—his membership in the Congress of People's Deputies. Nevertheless, Salutsky told me, Ligachev's political star was rising again; Salutsky felt that Ligachev aspired *not to replace* Gorbachev but to influence him, much as Deng Xiaoping exercises a conservative influence over Chinese affairs while holding no formal office. The conservatives wanted, in effect, to replace men like Shevardnadze and Aleksandr N. Yakovlev—who lost his government job on Christmas Day, when the Presidential Council was abolished—as the people Gorbachev turned to for ideas and advice. It is a strategy that would not surprise anyone familiar with court politics in old St. Petersburg, where the liberal impulses of more than one czar were gradually smothered by conservative advisers.

When I sought an appointment with Ligachev, it was clear that he wanted to create the impression of a man who still had access to the corridors of power, because he delayed our meeting for a day, until he could arrange to hold it in the ochre-colored Supreme Soviet building, and in a room Salutsky and I reached by walking past Gorbachev's office. Ligachev is a white-haired, ruddy man of seventy, and his appearance supported his reputation for personal austerity. He wore a gray suit that looked as if it might have come off a rack at GUM, the state department store, and a Soviet-made wristwatch with a plain leather band. In the course of our conversation, however, he smiled and joked more often than his dour public image had led me to expect, and he carefully noted that there are some reforms he agrees with. He considered the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan to be "adventurist," he told me, and he supported the right of the Eastern European nations to self-determination and self-government, without interference from Moscow.

Still, on a range of other issues he made clear his disagreement with the trend of *perestroika*. "I have a somewhat different view of *glasnost*," he said. "I felt and feel that the process of *glasnost* must develop within the framework of socialist pluralism. To give space to those who are trying to undermine that structure—well, excuse me, I don't think that's sensible." The reunification of Germany was "an absorption," he said. "The Federal Republic devoured the German Democratic Republic, if you want to be realistic about it." He suggested that Gorbachev and Shevardnadze *should* have used the presence of Soviet troops in the country as leverage to obtain a more favorable resolution of the problem of Germany's membership in NATO and other military questions. He blamed Yakovlev for vacillating on the treatment of separatist movements.

"From my point of view, the leadership of our country underestimated that danger," he said. "It threw all its forces into the battle against so-called conservatism. But conservatism presents no danger at all to *perestroika*. The main evil forces—and I've been saying this for a year—are those which are trying to break up the Soviet Union, the national chauvinist forces. Comrade Gorbachev, finally, finally, in his speech at the Party plenum, said for the first time the same thing—that the main danger is the national chauvinist forces."

With the status of both Shevardnadze and Yakovlev uncertain, Gorbachev is likely to hear much more such advice in the future. He will undoubtedly face strong pressure to assert control over the rebellious republics—with economic sanctions and, if they fail, with force. It will not be a climate conducive to continuing to reform the economy or to opening the political system. He could well survive as President only to find, as Russian rulers of the past have found, that he has presided over another period of stagnation and retrenchment. "There is a law governing political revolutions and reforms," Nodari Simonia told me. "You have a wave going in this direction." He moved his right hand in a flowing curve to the left. "And it goes too far to be in accordance with the real situation. Then, because it went too far, this wave comes back." He moved his left hand to the right, stopping it a few inches from where the right hand had begun. "It does not reach back to the beginning point but to some point where there are still some gains. I hope that Gorbachev can solve the problem of this law of political history." But after the events of late December there was little reason to believe that he could, or even that he wanted to.

—Robert Cullen

BOOKS

Not Quite Adult

IF the second volume of Richard Lingeman's biography of Theodore Dreiser—"An American Journey, 1908-1945" (Putnam; $39.95)—seems less vivid and continuously interesting, though no less literate and thorough, than the first, which came out in 1986 under the title "At the Gates of the City, 1871-1907," the reason may be that Mr. Lingeman has had less help from Dreiser, who covered his early years in two exceptionally intimate and frank volumes of autobiography, "Newspaper Days" (1922) and "Dawn" (1931). Or it may be that the spectacle of a great man running down is less satisfactory than that of a poor nobody rising to become a great man.

Not that Dreiser in 1908 was hailed as a great man yet, though he had written one great novel, "Sister Carrie" (1900). After years of licking the wounds incurred from the commercial failure of this allegedly immoral first novel, he had reconstituted himself as the editor-in-chief of a trio of women's fashion magazines owned by the Butterick Company, a maker of tissue-paper dress patterns. Dreiser's office was baronial, and his salary had started, in 1907, at the princely amount of seven thousand dollars, with bonuses keyed to circulation, which did rise under his editorship. When one of his secretaries "asked him why a man who could write such a great book as *Sister Carrie* wasted his time editing a ladies' magazine, Dreiser shrugged. 'One must live.' " He lived in quiet bourgeois fashion on West 123rd Street with his wife of ten years, Sara, a genteel and petite former schoolteacher from Missouri unglamorously nicknamed Jug—"because she wore brown so often that she resembled the little brown jug of the song." Dreiser had been attracted to Jug when he was a lowly twenty-two-year-old reporter in St. Louis. She was two years older than he and, as the daughter of a prominent farmer and Montgomery County politician, socially superior. In "Newspaper Days" he wrote that by the time they married, in December of 1898, "the first flare of love had thinned down to the pale flame of duty." But she loved him, gave him more sex than he at times could handle, and remained Mrs. Dreiser until her death, in 1942.

"Hon, what's an allegory?"

Ten years after the wedding, he was romantically restless, and his infatuation with an eighteen-year-old piquantly named Thelma Cudlipp (he met her when he joined, in an un-Dreiserian fit of levity, a ballroom-dancing group called the Fantastic Toe Club) tipped the balance. Though he never bedded Miss Cudlipp, his lumbering attempt caused enough fuss to spring him both from cohabitation with Jug and from his editorship of ladies' magazines. Rather than give up his pursuit of Thelma, he resigned his position with Butterick in October, 1910. Freed from respectability, he swiftly finished "Jennie Gerhardt," a novel that he had begun in 1901 but had abandoned, and commenced two others, "The 'Genius' " and "The Financier"; at the same time, he embarked upon his insatiable, convoluted career of sexual entanglements. Lillian Rosenthal, "a plump and pretty young woman with a musical bent," was the twenty-year-old daughter of his landlords on Riverside Drive; their affair began, as so many would, with a letter, from her, about literature. She had read "Jennie Gerhardt" in manuscript, and felt that its happy ending rang false; Dreiser agreed, and seduced his adviser in the bargain.

This characteristic pattern, of sexual and editorial services mingled, would repeat with a number of women—Anna Tatum, Louise Campbell, Estelle Kubitz, Sally Kusell, Clara Clark, Esther Van Dresser, and Marguerite Tjader Harris. Helen Richardson, who was to be his long-suffering, oft-betrayed mistress for twenty-four years and finally, after Jug's death, the second Mrs. Dreiser, developed editorial skills but had come to him in New York as a distant cousin from Oregon. Her look of "lympathic sensuality" aroused him; aroused in turn, she "promised to read all his novels." Like an earlier inamorata, Elaine Hyman (who took the stage name Kirah Markham), Helen was essentially an aspiring actress. Interlarded with these major mistresses were many compulsive conquests. One of the latter, Yvette Szekely, the teenage daughter of his confidante Margaret Szekely, denied that Dreiser used women. "Why were they being 'used'?" she responded to Mr. Lingeman in 1983. "They were happy. They loved him. . . . He told everyone that she was the only one. He really did care about the person—not that he pretended to love and didn't. If he had five women, he really cared for them." Marguerite Harris, who was to throw her body on Dreiser's corpse in the sight of the grieving widow, wrote in her memoir, "Theodore Dreiser: A New Dimension," of how he, in his "utter simplicity," allowed "the urgency of the moment" to control his affairs. She explained, "Dreiser simply *was* his own emotions, his own instincts, or intuitions, attempting to communicate them directly, often in terms contradictory to each other." The reader of Mr. Lingeman's biography cannot but be struck by how much indulgence Dreiser asked of women, and how much he did receive. Helen Dreiser dedicated *her* memoir, "My Life with Dreiser," "To the unknown women in the life of Theodore Dreiser, who devoted themselves unselfishly to the beauty of his intellect and its artistic unfoldment." Even when he was young, poor, homely, and severely inhibited, both by Victorian puritanism and by his father's fierce Catholic religiosity, Dreiser was helpfully aided in unfoldment by "fast" college coeds, amiable prostitutes, and still nubile landladies; women flocked to the needy call of those deep-set, smoldering eyes and meaty "Austrian"—his own characterization—lips. By 1917, he was confiding to his diary, "I must give up so much screwing or I will break down."

As a writer, Dreiser was dependent upon the aid of other people, to the point that some of his later works—including the two posthumously published novels, "The Bulwark" and "The Stoic"—are virtually collaborations. Given an erratic early education by German-speaking nuns, Dreiser flunked schoolboy grammar and was ever a poor speller. His career as a Midwestern reporter and New York magazine writer, in the eighteen-nineties, accustomed him to heavy remedial editing; when one of his female advisers, Ruth Kennell, pointed out his grammatical mistakes and superfluous words, he answered unapologetically, "I have been so offending all my life. All my books are full of them." Jug, the former schoolteacher, took a hand in "Sister Carrie," changing such Dreiserian locutions as "On her feet were yellow shoes and in her hands her gloves" to the more customary but possibly less vigorous "Her brown shoes peeped occasionally from beneath her skirt. She carried her gloves in her hand." Dreiser's friend and fellow-writer Arthur Henry went through the manuscript with him, and together they excised over thirty thousand excessively philosophical or sexually specific words. About twenty-five thousand words came out of "Jennie Gerhardt." One energetic editor promised to reduce the all too confessional "A Traveler at Forty" from five hundred thousand to one hundred thousand. Fifty thousand words or so were deleted from "An American Tragedy," and though Dreiser supposedly joked to his editors at Boni & Liveright, "What the hell is 50,000 words between friends?," he restored over half of them. H. L. Mencken, in his review of the novel, called it "a vast, sloppy, chaotic thing of 385,000 words—at least 250,000 of them unnecessary!" In the heyday of their friendship, Dreiser had been guided by Mencken's suggestions in cutting seventy-seven pages from "The Financier." By the time of his Hollywood twilight (1939-45), Dreiser's authorial control had grown so slack that a young movie-magazine writer, Cedric Belfrage, concocted the topical book "America Is Worth Saving" out of Dreiser's boozy ramblings. Belfrage claimed, "He couldn't have possibly written the book by himself, so in fact I wrote the book." Two of Dreiser's faithful muses ghosted a series of *Esquire* sketches that he signed, and Louise Campbell reduced so much of "The Bulwark" to "good clear English" that Marguerite Harris, to whom he had dictated the text, protested that the book had "lost much of its relation" to Dreiser. How much rough-hewn literature was lost through the drastic editing that Dreiser willingly suffered, out of necessity and laziness, remains for a patient textual scholar to define, in a restorative edition such as has already been given some cavalierly edited novels of Faulkner.

Faulkner, at his most eccentric and willfully windy, thought he knew what he was doing; Dreiser will never be, so muddied is his prose at the source, a model of stylistic integrity. He was not only awkward but careless. His habits, early acquired, of journalistic appropriation and recycling exposed him, several times in his career, to charges of plagiarism: "Sister Carrie" embodies a passage of slightly paraphrased George Ade; parts of "Dreiser Looks at Russia" were lifted almost intact from the newspaper reports of Dorothy Thompson; and the trial in "An American Tragedy" draws nakedly on the transcript of the actual trial of Chester Gillette, including virtually verbatim sections of the pathetic letters from Gillette's victim, Grace Brown. One of Dreiser's later amanuenses, Clara Clark, called in to save "The Stoic," observed that "for a famous novelist he was extremely humble about his writing."

It would seem that Dreiser never totally recovered from the discouragement and nervous paralysis that the suppression, by its own publishers, of "Sister Carrie" imposed on him. Never again would he write with quite such pure and innocent trust in his powers and his message—"I'll get it all in!" he once vowed, of America's reality—as he did in that first novel. Not even the large critical and popular success of "An American Tragedy" (1925) wholly lifts the air of melancholy and distraction, of weariness and muddle, from the career described in "An American Journey." "An American Tragedy," splendid though passages are, is a belabored, mechanically plot-ted book compared with "Sister Carrie." The youthful novel coolly dismisses the providential doom that Victorian morality claimed must follow upon sexual trespass; its morality is fresh and actual, based on what Dreiser saw around him, in the cities he knew and in the lives of his sisters. Whereas "An American Tragedy" tells an old-fashioned cautionary tale: a boy raised in piety is seduced by the world and becomes a sinner and a murderer and is punished. In the earlier book, the fallen woman rises; in the later, those who dare unsanctioned love perish, and Dreiser seems to be working less out of observation than out of his own deeps of guilty longing. The dismal novel's effect is to make us long for the straight and narrow path. Stuart P. Sherman, a vehement foe of Dreiser's earlier fictional indiscretions, praised the author, in the New York *Herald Tribune*, for having become at last, with "An American Tragedy," a "good moralist." At any rate, the book is a rather lonely triumph, achieved after a decade of false starts and professional quarrels and fruitless haring after Hollywood dollars, and followed by two decades without another completed novel.

Dreiser's literary impotence after 1925 is the most striking riddle of the years 1908-45, even granted that he was, in our honorable American way, a writer of starts and stops, of elephantine gestation periods and quasi-religious periods of hesitation and meditation. The older he got, the more he indulged his itch to philosophize and make pronouncements. Some of his civic acts still seem admirable and brave, such as his defense of the Scottsboro boys and his well-publicized (in part because he blithely took along a pretty libertarian identified as "Marie Pergain") investigation of miners' conditions in Kentucky's warring Harlan County. But dust and discredit have thickly gathered upon his hopes for an American-style Communism, his Anglophobic wish to keep us from going to war against Hitler, and his final, rather mystical enlistment in the Communist Party. His attempt to join the Party in 1930 had been turned down by the cautious American Communist Party Secretary Earl Browder, who said of Dreiser, "He did not seem quite adult, which was part of his charm." To Cedric Belfrage ten years later, Dreiser seemed a "man in a fog

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groping around, looking for scapegoats." One wonders if the fog was not partly alcoholic: Belfrage described how a midday drink of straight whiskey would unhinge the dictating session, and Dreiser confessed to Mencken, of whiskey, "I love and need it so." The biographer elaborates: "He carried a half pint of cheap rye in his pocket and would take a nip whenever he felt bored or tired." Though not as spectacularly addicted as Fitzgerald and Faulkner, Ring Lardner and Sinclair Lewis, Dreiser drank with his bibulous generation, and in his Hollywood years he routinely started the day with "a small drink," which led to more. Much of his life after he left Jug does seem a groping, an unedifying scramble of new addresses and new women, of unearned advances and unfinished projects, of irksome suppressions and paranoid quarrels, of pompous posturing as an author, with his Westchester estate and seething harem of groupies.

Yet no excess or vanity quite obliterated his instinctive honesty and largeness of spirit. Observing him in the Harlan County investigations, Dos Passos wrote, "There was a sort of massive humaneness about him, a self-dedicated disregard of consequences, a sly sort of dignity that earned him the respect of friend and foe alike." Sherwood Anderson, upon hearing that Sinclair Lewis, and not Dreiser, had won the first Nobel Prize given to an American writer, wrote a friend, "Dreiser has had real tenderness in him. Lewis never. It seems to me that Lewis must have got it out of European dislike of America." Dreiser's was an honesty that contained contradictions: he died a member of the Communist Party and also a churchgoer. He and Helen, not herself a believer, had attended a Christian Science church for a period, but he had found most consolation at the Mt. Hollywood Congregational Church; its liberal pastor, the Reverend Alan Hunter, spoke at Dreiser's funeral, along with the Communist playwright and screenwriter John Howard Lawson. A third voice at the service was that of Charlie Chaplin, who read one of Dreiser's copious vers libres; the entertainer's presence was fitting, since a central Dreiserian theme was the rise of America's popular, commercial culture at the expense of Old World pieties and stabilities. His father, the fanatically pious Johann Paul Dreiser, reportedly once said, "There is no real faith in this country. On the other side—there is the real faith." Theodore Dreiser never stopped rummaging about for some sort of God. Mencken, a champion of "Sister Carrie" and a lifelong correspondent if not an unwavering admirer of Dreiser's, was exasperated by the novelist's muddle of sex, pseudoscience, and fellow-travelling. In Mencken's "A Book of Prefaces," Dreiser was described as an "Indiana peasant, snuffling absurdly over imbecile sentimentalities, giving a grave ear to quackeries, snorting and eye-rolling with the best of them. . . . The truth about Dreiser is that he is still in the transition stage between Christian Endeavor and civilization." In 1916, Mencken complained in a letter to Ernest Boyd that Dreiser was "a fearful ass and . . . it is a very difficult thing to do anything for him"; two years later, he was complaining to Ben Huebsch how susceptible Dreiser was "to the flattery of self-seeking frauds, particularly those with cavities between their legs." Mencken was as clear-sighted and sexually reserved as Dreiser was muddleheaded and libidinous; neither churches nor the Communist Party nor female wiles fooled the sage of Baltimore. Yet it was Dreiser's capacity for muddle that made him an artist and Mencken something less.

Young Fannie Hurst met Dreiser in his pince-nezed, Butterick Company editorial capacity early in the century, and remembered his "strange lantern of a face." When Dreiser, in the dark early days of the Depression, mumblingly addressed a group of writers he had assembled on the question of what intellectuals might do for the American worker, one of those in attendance, Louis Adamic, wrote, "Dreiser's own great honesty and bewilderment had engulfed everybody." His bewilderment enabled him to enter without condescension or any slighting of nuance into the bewilderment of his characters. In the world of his fiction, people all want something, and everything is for sale, and love is the great commodity; his paragraphs buzz with the market calculations of his women and men, and religious scruples and spiritual aspirations have their tender weight among the other factors. The constrained affair, in "An American Tragedy," between Clyde Griffiths and Roberta Alden is traced with an intense delicacy, from both sides. Clyde's wavering conscience, with a boyish puzzlement at its core, is honored to the end. The majestic patience with which Dreiser recounts his hero's low doomed pilgrimage amid the enticements and opportunities of capitalist America may have wearied Mencken, but it did not weary readers who shared Dreiser's reverence for our faltering human substance, not as it should or might be but as it is. His subject, he once told an interviewer, was "life as it is, the facts as they exist, the game as it is played." Even his notorious self-centeredness helped him be true to life. Someone less selfish than he could not have brought off his stately fictional interweaves of advantage-seeking selves—novels that in their crude honesty kept offending those to whom the social contract and its repressions were sacred. A review of "A Hoosier Holiday" (1916) complained that the "ill-bred, undisciplined" author was "outside all the conventions and decent loyalties of the society which he professes to represent." Another review of the same book marvelled admiringly, "To him to tell the truth is natural, and to dream is natural." This maverick naturalness redeems much to be deplored, in his literary style and his life style, and lends him, above most other American writers in the century that opened with "Sister Carrie," a lantern glow of the heroic.

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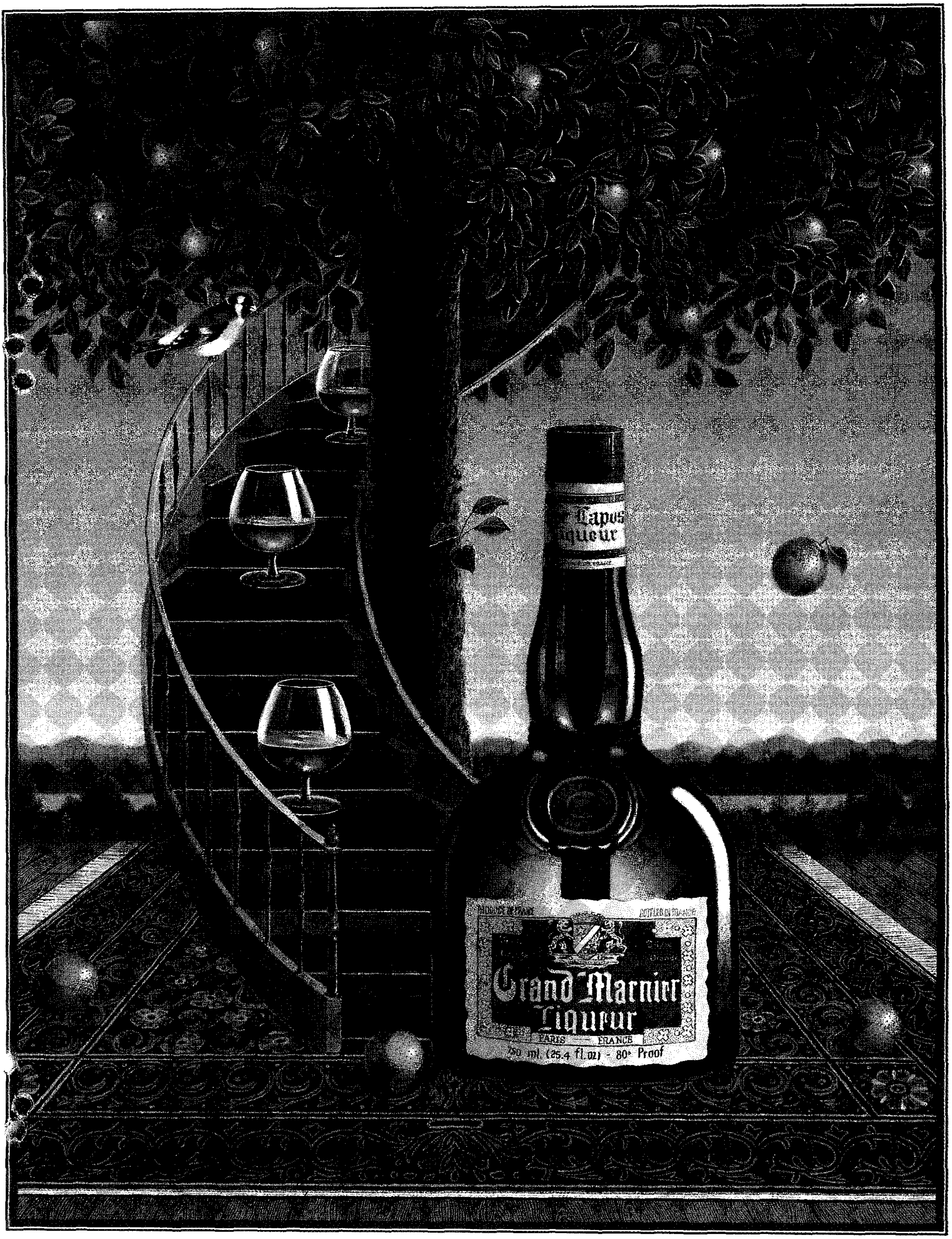
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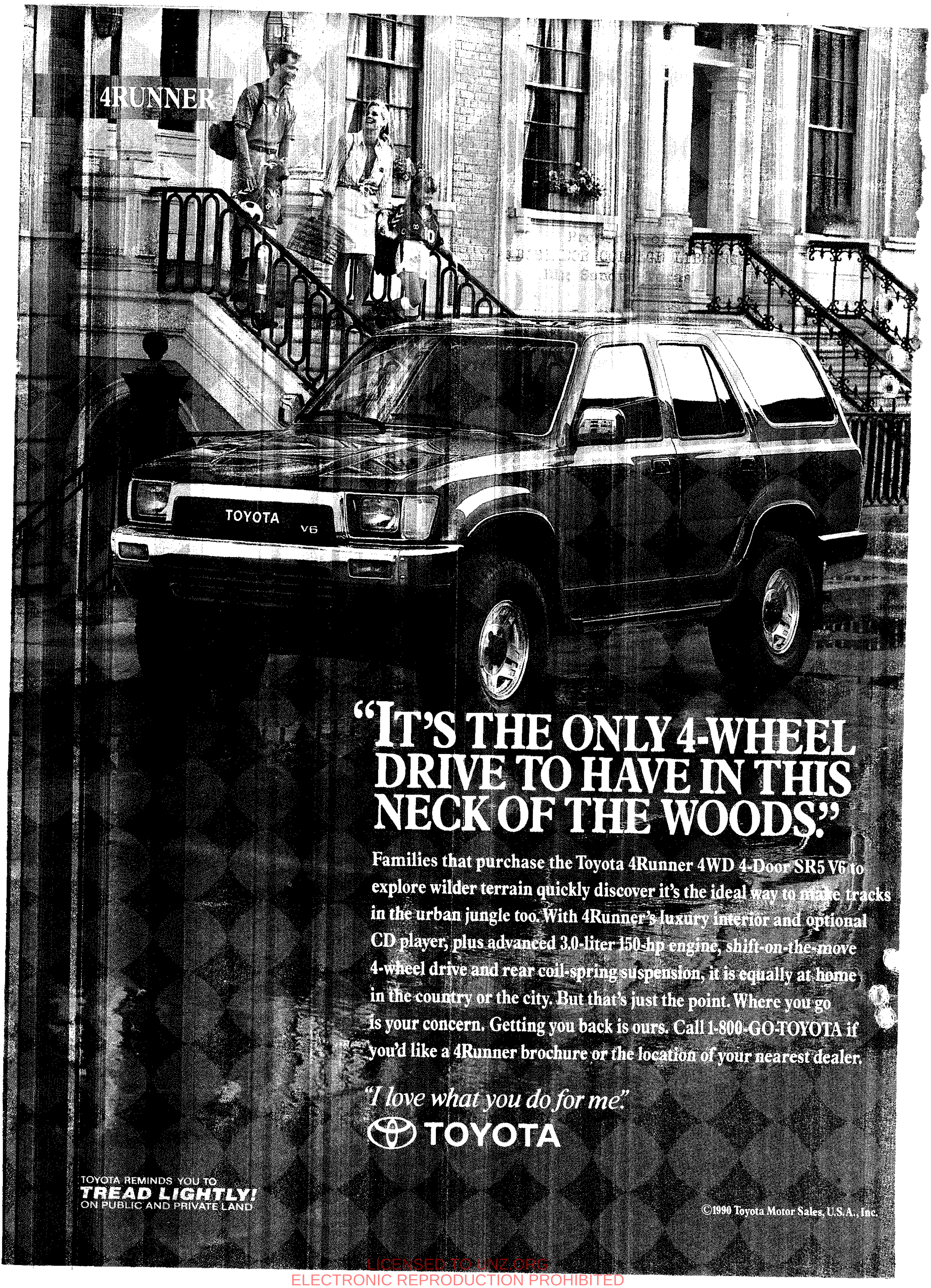

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